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Education and the Attack on History

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ON THE long front of the battle that today rages so fiercely in our country between men of tradition and those who are minded (either witlessly or with full knowledge of what they are about) to cut us off still more from our roots, some of the most decisive fighting goes on in the sector of college education. A heavy fire of criticism has raked upon the colleges during the past quarter-century, and not one of important note has escaped some measure of that fire. All have been assaulted in their traditional curricula; all have seen their faculties locked in strife over various reforms which often represent not merely new methods but new educational purposes. And there is no doubt about its being the traditionalists who have had to give ground.

Nor is it to be doubted that the fact is for the most part to be deplored, since the chief general result has been the pushing aside of men who respect solid educational values by "progressive" pragmatists bent on jettisoning things they lack the wits to understand or appreciate. A vast damage to sound college work has been done, and the only discernible compensating good is the now belated stirring of many conservative minds hitherto half-asleep; in which fact lies at least some slight hope for positive counter-reform on sound conservative lines. Long has this been needed, for indeed the conservatives have only been forced into retreat because (as is so often the case with conservatives) they lay down on the task of conserving.

I refer of course to the fact that before the opening of the present era of experimentation the college was gradually ceasing to be what it should be and what it originally was, namely, a thing with a purpose. The American college had once a definite object, a specific reason for existence: preparing men for entry upon professional studies, especially studies for the clerical profession. It served that end; for that was it formed, and so was its nature determined. Hence the faculty prescribed almost wholly what studies the student should pursue. In that curriculum were reason and definiteness of aim; those who maintained it could defend it rationally by reference to that aim. And moreover, it may be said to have reflected the mind of a society that still respected reason and believed that college should drill and discipline the intellects of young men rather than "adapt them to a changing world".

There came during the last century, however, vast social changes in the country, and these were necessarily mirrored in its higher education. Religion declined the while political democracy and industrial capitalism waxed strong, and with these came the power of the city, the decay of agrarian dominance, increased variety of economic occupations, and a rising demand for specialized schooling. Many callings once considered mere trades were dignified as professions; and as our society in its economic arrangement became more functionalized and complex, in its intellectual culture it became more secular, more diversified, more untraditional. All this sweeping change in American life took place under the reign of liberal individualist doctrines and laissez-faire policies, the rightness of which seemed to our pragmatist minds to be proved by the growth of the nation, the rise of its material prosperity, and its conquest and settlement of a continent. Now this new society, like the older one it had succeeded, was, as I have said, mirrored in a changed college. The curriculum was invaded by new studies, notably modern languages, history, and the social sciences, which drew away the college from its old strict allegiance to the classical tradition. Also, under pressure of democratic demand, many higher institutions added whole new schools which not only competed with the liberal arts college but showed a strong tendency to exert a shaping influence on its curriculum. Courses of study multiplied, rising in number like a tidal wave, until in our own times the thing got badly out of hand, especially in our state institutions which, like public secondary schools, had to yield before educator-politicians and the pressure of ambitious special interests.

Yet there was in all this no absolutely necessary engulfment of the liberal arts college in educational chaos. An adjustment to meet the new age was possible through curricular changes involving no abandonment of clear and definite aim and reason for existence, namely, provision of an intellectual discipline suited to men and women as rational and moral beings. It was entirely possible to move with the times, neither dropping old and permanent values nor changing essential purposes. But unfortunately there was a general failure to effect positive reform toward this end, and the result was penetration of the college by those doctrines of individualism and laissez-faire which were permeating our whole society. The sign of their arrival was the now much-derided elective system which, like Liberalism in its early stages, seemed at first to make for a healthy freedom and progress, but ultimately worked to destroy unity, order, and purpose, and delivered over the college to aimless drifting. Each faculty department showed an increasing disposition to emphasize its own special importance at the expense of the curriculum as a whole, and of course to resist efforts at centralized reform and coordination; in which situation lay a strong tendency for studies to become over-specialized, unrelated one to another, and irrelevant not only to life but to any rational end of college education. That has been, and is, the condition of the college which numerous experimenting reformers are attacking today. They want to overcome anarchy, irrelevance, and aimlessness, and close the divorce between related disciplines by a new integral coordination and purpose.

Now it was toward this end that a group of Columbia men in the social sciences, some fifteen years ago, began an interesting work. Although drawn from different departments, they combined to offer a single course of study directed upon the problems of industrial civilization.

They decided [to quote the words of two of the group, Rexford Tugwell and Leon Keyserling] that the artificial boundaries separating the various social sciences made it difficult to bring all of these disciplines to bear at once upon the insistent problems of our times. They organized a course which is taught cooperatively by specialists drawn from many fields, and which considers issues such as law administration, price regulation, population distribution – to take but a few of many – not as problems of sociology or history or government or economics, but as public questions calling for whatever aid knowledge has to offer.

This course, admirably designed to apply related studies to specific and concrete social realities, has had, say these professors, notable and important results:

> When economics had been taught *as* economics, and history *as* history, there had been little need to ask what broader purposes these disciplines should serve; and even had somebody raised the issue, there would have been few with the experience necessary to formulate a satisfactory answer. But when economics and history linked arms for the purpose of seeking out the insistent problems of industrialism and assessing the worth of the contribution to human betterment which each discipline might make, something new happened. Every one of the social sciences had to reconsider what it could offer to the common project *and what lines its own future development should take. This has been a great gain, for it marks a transition from scholasticism to instrumentalism.* (The italics are mine.)

And yet another "great gain" was this, that the teachers were led on "from a consideration of the function of each subject as part of a vast social science project to an evaluation of the objectives of the project in general"; at which point they were face to face with the question so many conservative professors have been most reluctant to confront, namely, the question of what are the proper purposes of education, more particularly of college education, in present-day society. Some results of this encounter are set forth in two recent volumes* of commanding interest, of such commanding interest indeed that they give the provocation for this paper.

Of the second and more recent of the two (which presents a survey of contemporary educational trends abroad), nothing need here be said. It is the first, dealing as it does only with the American college and university scene, that has an arresting importance. Five monographs make up its content, and they are written by Professors Tugwell, and Keyserling, Blaisdell, Cole, and McGoldrick. All have to do with teaching social science to undergraduates, and all propose reformed ways of doing it.

If Professor McGoldrick's monograph be excepted (since it is largely descriptive, cautious in tone, and comes to little more than a plea for less specialized text-books and "a greater integration of work in recent history, social and political science"), there is a striking and easily recognized common denominator of thought in the views set forth in all these studies. This, I think, is a fair statement of it: That the college must emerge from aloof isolation in the life of contemporary society and be made to serve more efficaciously and more directly the needs of a changing world; that it must seek to equip students with the instrumental means of organizing and directing that changing world; that this objective is to be approached through the social sciences, and that it can only be reached by radical reform in the presentation of these; which reform consists in liberating them from the dominion of history and tradition, in short, making them "present-minded". Put in other words, what in essence is proposed is the abandonment of objectivity in social studies and (since this follows necessarily) the abandonment also of any really fundamental analysis and criticism of present society.

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* REDIRECTING EDUCATION *edited by Rexford Tugwell and Leon Keyserling* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. 2 vols. 296 and 285 pp. $3.00 per volume).

Here, say these men, is this vast collectivist society; it is a fact, whether we like it or not, and what is important for us to learn is not how it came to be or whether it should be, but how to make the best of it, how to keep it going, how to make it better serve our desires for "the more abundant life". The Great Society, writes Professor Tugwell, "grew up weed-fashion, unwanted, legislated against. But it colours our landscape, and we shall have to use it. . . . The persistence of this common nuisance we must make a virtue of; and we must do it whole-heartedly, pretending now that this was what we have always wanted." The same note is struck again and again by the other contributors to the volume: here we are, and the main concern of the social sciences is not to find how we arrived but to show us the means of continuing on our way. Professor Keyserling has a very low opinion of history both as an aid in understanding the present and a torch for lighting the way into the future; he wants students' minds kept working upon the contemporary world, and tells us that "with growing faith in the efficacy of human effort (*sic*) there must be less reliance upon materials drawn from the past". Professor Blaisdell, likewise, contends insistently that the student should be introduced to the study of economics "by presenting the picture of a changing and moving society". The best that can be done, in his opinion, "is to orient teaching to the trends which have been recognized. Thus we either strengthen them or endeavour to modify them so as to achieve the kind of life we admire." He, too, manifestly holds history in rather low esteem.

Now the reason for this social science revolt against history, which is scandalously widespread in the educational world today, is very plain, and we may find an excellent showing of it in these monographs. It is simply that belief in historical truth is growing weak, that subjectivist philosophy is storming the citadel of history at last. Scientific and objective history, built upon careful and critical study of documents and rational analysis of evidence (its strongest foundation), is mocked at widely today as an illusion of the nineteenth-century mind, as a persistence of discredited scholastic and Cartesian thinking. Historical truth, it is now said, cannot really be known; at the most only a small portion of the facts of the past can be discovered and these may be variously interpreted; every age rewrites history, which is at best a hypothetical approximation of truth, at worst a mere fiction agreed upon. Such skepticism permeates these monographs. Professor Tugwell says history "all depends on what you have in mind", and therefore it is to him "merely another instrument such as other intellectual references are, a kind of elaborate analogy having to do with something more important"; which something "just at this juncture is a deep apprehension concerning the availability to some hundred and twenty-five millions of Americans of what seem to be the instruments necessary to their progress". Objectivity Tugwell believes to be "largely myth", and hence "for the time being we have had enough of studying history; we need projection and discussion of methods of attainment". This professor indeed has so little respect for history that he actually proposes the deliberate prostitution of it as an instrumental means of social reform and social management. Let us, he says, invent a historical myth to the effect that our history had from its beginning, a "collectivistic seed", which has grown to be the Great Society. "Can we not indeed show", he asks, "how our history tended always to this end? The time is ripe for just such a conspiracy. Its mottoes could decorate our banners; it could clothe itself in a satisfactory glamour; it could serve for motive."

But Tugwell's dismissal of history as useless save as a myth-making for revolutionary ends is not the major indictment of history to be found in these monographs. Formulation of that is the work of Professor Cole, and this is perhaps the more impressive for the fact that, unlike the other writers, Cole is a historical specialist and is really attempting here a defence of the value of history for the social sciences. It is however a defence that ends in a surrender. Cole argues reasonably enough for the genetic approach to an understanding of contemporary society, insisting rightly that we cannot really know the world of today unless we learn through historical study how it came to be as we find it; but he then goes on to suggest a reform in teaching and studying history which reveals in him the same anti-historical bias that is so characteristic of Tugwell. Once it is realized, he tells us, that history has as its chief and fundamental object the attainment of understanding of the contemporary world, "it may be found necessary to approach history by way of the present rather than the past . . . to take some element or fact or problem of the present and trace back its development as far into the past as was necessary to give a clear understanding of the subject involved, and no further, then return to the present, take another problem, and trace it back". Such a change, Cole evidently thinks, would "go far to revitalize historical study", and would

> avoid the danger of teaching irrelevant facts for their own sake. It would tie everything to the present and be a continual demonstration of the importance of history for an understanding of the modern world, of the relevance of history to the actual environment of the student, of the significance and meaning of historical change and historical processes. . . . No longer would the object of history be hazy, the reasons for studying it obscure.

So would Professor Cole make history "instrumental" after the fashion of the reformed methods of presenting the social sciences. We are to start with the present and work backwards, that is, teach history by finishing it first, and I think it ought to be fairly obvious that this really amounts to dispensing with history and substituting sociology for it. For it is simply not true to say that the object of historical study is to gain an understanding *of the present.* That is indeed an important element of the ultimate justification for studying history, but it is certainly not the object of studying history. That object, direct, clear, and immediate, is to gain understanding *not of the present but of the past*, and when that object is not being pursued one is not really studying history. It is just here, I think, that Professor Cole gets into what might be called a sort of intellectual short-circuit. He pleads justly for knowledge of the past as throwing the light of understanding upon the present, and then proposes that history be taught in a way that does not lead to any real grasp upon the past. For you cannot get any picture of past times by merely searching them for an account of the origin and development of what seems significant and important in the present. Much that is most necessary for adequate insight into the life of the past is not to be had from that approach; whence it follows that since the past is not understood neither also is the present. Such a short cut through what would be essentially sociology implies, moreover, the loss of many enlightening comparisons between one age and another; which comparisons are of indispensable aid to students in reaching a truly critical view of their own social environment.

It is indeed very plain that Professor Cole, far from making any real defence of history, has betrayed it into the hands of its enemies. And the reason he has done this is equally plain. It is that, like the other contributors to this volume, he simply does not believe much in history. For him too objectivity is myth.

> The ordinary historical fact [he writes] is, indeed, a subjective judgement on the part of the historian rather than an objective record of something which occurred

in the past. If the status of a single historical fact is somewhat dubious, how much more so is the connection between any two facts. Should the historian strive for utter objectivity, his work would be composed of a disconnected series of bare statements strung together only by temporal or spatial relationship – after this, that; near this, something else.

Causes? Professor Cole, who is not behind the times and has read his eighteenth-century Hume, assures us "it is clear that the very concept of effective causation can be reduced to that of mere regularity of occurrence plus that of proximity in time or space". Wherefore is all history of quite shaky and dubious character, and Professor Cole bids us recognize that the writing of it "is a subjective process" (one wishes to ask who ever thought this was anything else?) "Further, the historian must have certain criteria in the light of which he may select, order, and interpret his facts. These criteria will be the ideas of the historian as to the importance, relation, and meaning of the facts. The ideas may have some connection with objective reality, then again they may not." This being so (as it undoubtedly is), Professor Cole asks whose history is true, and replies that we can never know, that we cannot actually get at historical truth at all. Now this is substantially what was said by Tugwell who values history as a means of myth-making, and Professor Cole, I regret to say, falls back upon much the same position. He says that all this "does not reduce the value of history" because we may take refuge from despair of knowing the past in the As If philosophy of Vaihinger, who "has demonstrated clearly that the use of fictions, myths, unfounded figures of speech, and so on leads in many cases to perfectly correct results". Though our history may be false, we can pretend it is true and so make use of it!

Such is the defence (and I may say the best defence) of history that can be made today by men who have ceased to believe in reason, in the capacity of the intellect for knowing. For that, manifestly, is fundamental in all this revolt against the affirmation that the past can be known. What you have are men saying that human reason cannot take certain hold upon truth, that rational analysis working upon evidence cannot draw out truth from it. This attack on historical objectivity is neither more nor less than a new attack on reason, a further undermining of the foundations of knowledge by those currents of skepticism set in motion in the Western mind two centuries ago. And wide indeed is its acid action among the new generation of philosopher-historians who have arisen to dismay and confound the older generation that was schooled in the Ranke tradition, eschewed all metaphysics, and conceived history as a problem in positivist science. Let this new doctrine win full way, let it conquer the social sciences and go on (as indeed it already is going on) to make over all college studies, and we shall see the end of anything properly called the study or teaching of history in academic institutions. Nay more, we shall see the end at last of that great glory of Western civilization, the humanist tradition in education in which man has been conceived as a knowing being to be disciplined for the task of learning truth, rather than as a clever animal to be trained for more successful manipulation of his environment.

Toward that end these anti-historical instrumentalists propose to lead by giving us a new kind of education, and if they succeed we are most certainly going to have a new and yet more radical break from tradition, a further tearing up of our roots, a further loss of memory whence we sprang. Three centuries ago the mind of the West, captivated by the Cartesian philosophy, made the last great breach with tradition. Confidently affirming the full sufficiency and absolute sovereignty of human reason, it soared aloft on that magnificent adventure of flying through the skies of rational science to the very frontiers of the universe and beyond. Today it completes the downward curve of the arc that was so inscribed, returning to earth with the news that reason has failed, that man is still a prisoner of blindness and cannot really know anything at all, not even now his own past. Once that past was disavowed in the name of reason, and now are we bidden to disavow it again in the name of unreason. Of such is this new reform.

Characters and Character

A Note on Fiction

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

I. *Mrs. Wharton's Difficulty*

IF THE tenth and last of the Muses is the patroness of fiction, that must have been the power who imposed upon the accomplished Mrs. Wharton a baffling professional responsibility. So it came to pass that Edith Wharton, tutored by no less a technician than Henry James, expert in her rendering of the smart scene and the better sort nearest to her, must spend a time in the Massachusetts back country which was quite long enough to make her sensible of a new scene and set of characters, and to acquaint her with a local tragedy that clamoured to be told. How should she tell it? We must judge from the odd structural pattern of *Ethan Frome*, as well as from its unsatisfactory detail, that the problem gave her trouble. We are told as much in the Preface. It is an honest Preface, and only slightly disingenuous.

To the natives of Starkfield Mrs. Wharton must have been something of a foreign wonder; classifiable, being a "New York lady", yet a strange and outland personage. She evidently struck herself, too, as alien to the mind of the Starkfielders, in fact to a degree that threatened to inhibit her representation of Ethan, who was a particularly grim and taciturn one of them. Who should tell Ethan's story? For there must be means to bring his story, "in a way at once natural and picture-making, to the knowledge of its narrator", and through the narrator to the knowledge of the readers. If Ethan should tell it himself, it would not be identifiable with the main body of Mrs. Wharton's fiction. But if she should tell it, it would very likely be the story of a rather metamorphosed Ethan.

Says Mrs. Wharton of her harsh tragic plot and her strong silent actors:

> The theme of my tale was not one on which many variations could be played. It must be treated as starkly and summarily as life had always presented itself to my protagonists; any attempt to elaborate and complicate their sentiments would necessarily have falsified the whole. They were, in truth, these figures, my *granite outcroppings*; but half-emerged from the soil, and scarcely more articulate.

Of what use in a case like this was her trained and sophisticated sensibility? It was that which would have falsified the whole.

Mrs. Wharton compromised; or rather, since she did not thoroughly reform her usual practice, she temporized. She invented a special reporter for Ethan in the person of a young man of sensibility and education very like her own. In theory it gained her this, that the reporter became a man; and this, that not being herself he need not render quite the complete spiritual history of events associated with her name as an author. In effect, it gained her very little. Spiritually, this gentleman is cousin to the gentlemen who relate stories for Joseph Conrad and Willa Cather, and he could probably trace descent from one ghost writer or another who had been in Henry James's own employ. She makes for him a temporary residence in Starkfield and acquaints him with Ethan, at a time just twenty-four years after the event that is the heart of Ethan's story. How can he participate in it? He gets nothing out of Ethan, and only scraps of information out of the villagers, but manages finally to find himself snow-bound for the night at Ethan's house. Now Ethan's story is of a man, a wife, and an extra woman, and in Ethan's kitchen the reporter actually finds these three characters, still surviving, dumb and wretched, in the most enduring triangle that fiction has recorded. The scene is illuminating. But we catch only a glimpse of it. The reporter finds the illumination much before we do, and begins at once to spin the story, starting the twenty-four years back. To put together "this version of the story"; the phrase being followed by three rows of points or ellipses, and Chapter One. The story which we have heard of, and despaired of, has begun. It goes on. After nine chapters it is complete, externally with respect to events, and internally with respect to Ethan's mind. It sees Ethan just past the tragic smash. The last word is followed, in my edition, by four rows of ellipses and the resumption of the sketchy account of how the reporter later ferreted out the outlines of the story he has already told.

This is fairly remarkable, though not unique, since we have stories from Conrad which play similar tricks. We are allowed to anticipate the reporter who is gathering the story, and then we go back and see him make slight detective motions at gathering it; but we are forced to conclude that he did not gather it really; that, mostly, he made it up. Why a special reporter at all? And why such a peculiar chronological method? These are features which picture to me, if it is not impertinent, the perturbation of an author wrestling with an unaccustomed undertaking, uneasy of conscience, and resorting to measures.

Forgetting the Preface, and the exterior or enveloping story, we attend strictly to Ethan's story, and discover that the fictitious reporter has had the goodness to enter Ethan's own mind and present events under the form of a focussed and continuous inner experience. That is, we are made to identify our own existence with Ethan's and to live his story with him. Or we are expected to, but to the best of my knowledge we cannot quite do it, we cannot become naturalized in Ethan's world. The tone is not always Ethan's, I think, imagining I know him better than Mrs. Wharton does. For instance:

> Well, she could go back to her people, then, and see what they would do for her. It was the fate she was forcing on Mattie – why not let her try it herself? By the time she had discovered his whereabouts, and brought suit for divorce, he would probably – wherever he was – be earning enough to pay her a sufficient alimony. And the alternative was to let Mattie go forth alone, with far less hope of ultimate provision.

Much is doubtful here; the alimony business would suit Mrs. Wharton's usual run of well-placed characters far better than this countrified Ethan; and the vocabulary. But beyond these positive discords there is the feeling that, identified with Ethan, we are not having quite as much sheer experience as the events would entitle us to have; and reflecting upon this, we first recall, and then reject, Mrs. Wharton's intimation (the prefatory one) that Ethan did not have any complicated experience to record. The suspicion arises that, rather than this, Mrs. Wharton is merely not familiar with Ethan's variety of complications. The book is half long enough, or less; it is a "study", a well-proportioned first-draft or outline for the real circumstantial thing that was to come, that would have been fiction.

In view of Mrs. Wharton's successes with her own sort of material it will not be invidious to point to this relative failure, a case illustrating a difficulty that besets the conscientious author. Henry James himself would have failed in this particular undertaking; or if not, it is because his sense of tactics would not have permitted him to try it.

II. *George Meredith's No-difficulty*

Mrs. Wharton's predicament is this: she does not want to leave her own mentality too far, she is not at all sure that she will be at home in a strange one, so that she makes the change reluctantly; but she feels the necessity of entering Ethan's mentality, if his story is to be told, and in fact the necessity is imperative. It is commanded by her literary conscience. Clearly and sternly conscience says to the authors of fiction: Identify yourself with your characters.

Very modern, however, is the conscience that says this; decidedly a post-Victorian thing. The early and middle nineteenth century produced in English fiction half a dozen Titans who are scarcely to be matched for energy and scope, for the brilliant finish respective to their highly individual accomplishments, but whose conscience did not bother them with any such scruple as that we have just examined. There was

George Meredith with his prodigiously cultivated mind. It was equally at home in poetry, in philosophy, in smart epigram. It could do anything it pleased, with this single exception: it could not be still, could not wait in the background, must speak up and claim the middle of the floor – so much did it like the feel of its own activity and the sound of its own well-chosen words.

Meredith could present the processes of great minds. If the character had to be a poet, then Meredith had profuse verses ready to prove it; if a witty woman, then he paraded his Diana, who had a veritable cleverness to show when needed. The superlative was well within his range. But sometimes, like Mrs. Wharton, Meredith had to report for certain low and simple persons in his narrative. He engaged upon it blithely, without the least qualm, and without the least modulation in his brisk and hearty voice. The reason he is not disturbed by Mrs. Wharton's difficulty is that no such difficulty occurs to him. He frankly enjoys his own mentality and is aware of no ground for sacrificing it. (At least not in his earlier period does he think of sacrificing it.) The consequence is that his rush and his learning overwhelm the low man who is under observation, and turn him into a comic figure. When the commoner's boy Ripton is supposed to be thinking fearfully of his part with Master Richard in firing the farmer's ricks of hay, the mentality we really encounter is as follows:

> . . . the restriction was painful, and melancholy fell upon the boy. Mama Thompson attributed it to love. The daughters of parchment rallied him concerning Miss Clare Forey. . . . His nervousness, and unwonted pro-

pensity to sudden inflammation of the cheeks, were set down for sure signs of the passion. Miss Letitia Thompson, the pretty and least parchmenty one . . . gave the lad a fearful turn; for after dinner, when Mr. Thompson read the paper by the fire, preparatory to sleeping at his accustomed post, and Mama Thompson and her submissive female brood sat tasking the swift intricacies of the needle, and emulating them with the tongue, Miss Letty stole behind Ripton's chair, and introduced between him and his book the Latin initial letter, large and illuminated, of the theme she supposed to be absorbing him, as it did herself. The unexpected vision of this accusing Captain of the Alphabet, this resplendent and haunting A, fronting him bodily, threw Ripton straight back in his chair, while Guilt, with her ancient indecision what colors to assume on detection, flew from red to white, from white to red, across his fallen chaps. Letty laughed triumphantly. Amor, the word she had in mind, certainly has a connection with Arson.

I forbear to quote the famous passage in which Richard Feverel falls in love at sight. The action was within the bounds of a young man's action, but the mental processes come to us fatally resembling the metaphorical hyperbolic ones of the poet his author. It is a dreadful passage, even allowing for the fact that it is a bold and therefore praiseworthy attempt to do something with a scene universally neglected by authors: the love scene. After all, it is Richard's love scene, not the author's.

Evidently an author's brilliance may consist with a singular obtuseness; an obtuseness which certainly obtains as a dramatic quality and probably in the last resort obtains morally. I choose Meredith for the example because he has more than ordinary Victorian brilliance, and not much more than ordinary Victorian obtuseness. They were stylists in those days, and no power on earth could have made them relinquish their style. When they pretend to report the minds of the little characters, they are reporting their own, and the minds of the characters do not really come before us.

If fiction had been doomed to remain at this level, at the mercy of unscrupulous stylists, it would have died. It would have been too absurd to maintain credence. Its development lay in a direction which the aggressive stylists could not take. It needed their obvious genius less than it needed some humble artistic restraint. The genius of the stylists was in fact an encumbrance like the rich man's possessions, in the respect in which the latter were like the camel's hump: it denied them passage through a certain narrow opening, which led into the kingdom of art.

III. *The Vanishing Author*

Intellectual aristocrats who cannot come down from their dignity abound in every generation. Meredithianism has not been extinguished from the earth, nor will be. Our Mr. Tarkington contrives that the boy Penrod purchase an old accordion from a junk-dealer, and thus recounts his progress:

> With this purchase suspended from his shoulder by a faded green cord, Penrod set out in a somewhat homeward direction, but not by the route he had just travelled, though his motive for the change was not humanitarian. It was his desire to display himself thus troubadouring to the gaze of Marjorie Jones. Heralding his advance by continuous experiments in the music of the future, he

pranced upon his blithesome way, the faithful Duke at his heels. (It was easier for Duke than it would have been for a younger dog, because, with advancing age, he had begun to grow a little deaf.)

Turning the corner nearest to the glamoured mansion of the Joneses, the boy jongleur came suddenly face to face with Marjorie, and, in the delicious surprise of the encounter, ceased to play, his hands, in agitation, falling from the instrument.

"To display himself thus troubadouring"; a pretty phrase to characterize its author with. If the resources of Mr. Tarkington's mind are less opulent than those of Mr. Meredith, there has been no abatement in the author's intention to expose them. Penrod is merely Mr. Tarkington's occasion. But even boys have a fictional right to their own mentality. And what Mr. Tarkington does habitually at the expense of boys, other authors do in all seriousness with their characters frequently.

In spite of the hundreds of them, however, fiction has registered a very definite progress which may be said to be focussed in a single marked feature: the diminishing visibility of the author. It is really becoming disreputable for authors of fiction to display their learning, and we have a bad word for it: exhibitionism. In other fields the display may be legitimate, in fiction there is now a well-known understanding which would restrict the author to a more modest job of impartial reporting. Mrs. Wharton's problem is familiar to all good novelists. When their characters are mentally remote from themselves, they find it hard to report them from the inside; but they have to try it if they propose to report them.

The thing which conditions the writing of a modern novel is the gift for sympathy. By sympathy the author identifies himself with the character; by sympathy is able to escape from his own egoism, to lay down his learning and, if it comes to that, even his hard-won moral enthusiasms. The rôle of the novelist is not much more private than that of the dramatist, which is not much more private than that of the actors. The mental stock of the author may be both vast and superfine, but its usefulness is in enabling him to understand characters who have something better than ordinary in their own stock. It is going to be largely wasted in authors who elect characters that have nothing like it. This is the complaint the public can justly bring against Mrs. Wharton; in Ethan she does a character whom her special qualifications do not permit her to illuminate. The qualifications are relevant to the presentation of a certain order of characters, but for the presentation of certain others they are a hazard.

Sympathy bars the author from achieving visibility, by inducing the process of self-identification, make-believe, illusion of otherness, creative imagination, or what you will. Here we talk the language of aesthetics. The law of all the arts is consistent illusion. The failure or incompleteness of the work of art is not always owing to the author's lack of resources, it may be owing to the intrusion of his private, untranslated, personally unobjectionable self. Will the artists seek fame in their actual juridical persons or in their art? The latter is of the anonymous or projective kind which depends on the perfection of their indirect accomplishments. Doctor Johnson managed very largely with his personality, and so did Hercules, Beau Brummel, Cleopatra, and other bold, direct, and gifted persons, but Shakespeare had none, or at least none that he could make his fortune on. He, and Henry James, Mrs. Wharton, and others, have tried quite a different technique. Vanishing author, invisibility, indirection, and art.

Diminution of the author's visibility has been the most important technical objective of modern fiction, which by its unremitting perfectionism achieves a subtle and delicate distinction as an art. The forms of author-visibility might be listed, and then the order determined in which they disappear as authors grow in artfulness. I have tentative lists in my notes, and they look as if they would bear a great deal more discussion than is possible here.

A gross amateurish kind of visibility is attained by the Author as Historian. This is really a case of General Visibility; the author does not understand objective narration and makes lapses everywhere; he would do better in plain academic history. Sir Walter Scott ranks high as the summary historian in fiction. His novels are only half fiction; the rest is careful historian's work, summarizing the background, setting the stage, characterizing the persons. He could not write sustained narrative. Only technicians know how to avoid historical surveys and essays in their novels.

The Author as Poet; with rhapsodies about Nature, about Love, about anything. The true principle is that poetizing in fiction is permissible only when it is the characters who do it. When there is no character to whom it can be attributed, we sense the unfortunate author.

The Author as Philosopher, who interrupts his story to make sententious remarks, or even to enter chapters of philosophy.

The Author as Moralist, who cannot restrain his Platonic fervour. The last infirmity that besets the artist who works with words and ideas. Honoured by important sections of society for his very sins of visibility, he is all the more prone to commit them.

In an uncritical Victorian age the author registers in his own work through ordinary Adam's brashness. Today he does it rather through weakness; through the lack of adaptability or general shiftiness when the mind is in action. The critical standard has already been established. We owe it originally to the French Naturalists, perhaps. Or if we prefer our own domestic commodity, to Henry James, who showed once for all its supremacy in *Daisy Miller*, and again in *The Spoils of Poynton* and *The Ambassadors*.

IV. *In Defense of Authors' Virtue*

All of which leaves us in the slightly ridiculous position of having done a necessary job too well. We have cleared the fictional establishment of the marks of private authorship so thoroughly as to reduce the profession of author to something like that of public photographer, whose instrument is at the service of any face that offers. The novelist as naturalist, or as realist, is just the author as chameleon. In the will to assimilate himself into the characters he cannot afford the luxury of being a character himself; which does not sound like the whole intention of an art.

I have the notion that perfect sympathy is a gift in which the French literary temperament peculiarly excels, and after that the Russian, and perhaps the feminine temperament generally with very wide variations. Those who have it have a natural bonelessness, or it may be a sort of universality in the mental joints. It permits great and wise Gallic minds to throw themselves into any observed pattern, no matter how different from the one which is habitual to them in their private civic capacity. Flaubert absorbs himself into a Madame Bovary, and Julian Green, who we hear in private is originally somebody, becomes gallicized to the point of performing the disappearing act by identification with strange and limited persons on the margin of sane society. It is a histrionic sort of faculty. They do it incredibly well, as Mrs. Wharton could never have done it, nor James, and as the eminent Victorians would have let their pens rust and their right arms wither before they would have done it.

It is necessary to enter a plea on behalf of the preservation of virtue to the Anglo-American breed of novelists. It is not their style to do the disappearing act. It is not ordinarily in their power.

Under any system of humanistic or Aristotelian morality it is necessary to hold that sympathy must not be perfect. For it amounts to the abnegation of private personality, which is more than even art has the right to ask of its votaries, who, pursuing it, are already somewhat in the position of disfranchised personalities. Unlimited sympathy can never become the rule for all, for then people will be so busy adapting themselves to each other's minds that nobody will be left with an ultimate private mind to adapt to; the exponents of mutual sympathy will collide as in an unregulated traffic and bump their heads together.

James and Conrad, with fixed Anglo-reservations, studied the Naturalists and got exactly as much as they needed, which was a very great intensification of author's sympathy. George Moore studied them, acquired their faculty without reservations – an Irishman emancipated in his own notion from background – and brought unlimited sympathy into the practice of the English novel; but discovered later what I believe he never had the grace to acknowledge, that the result was the disappearance of George Moore the distinguished personality, and abandoned the hard-won accomplishment, very properly, and to the great benefit of English letters. Comparatively few English and American novelists have ever acquired such proficiency in sympathy as to be tempted.

These considerations as to the use and abuse of symapthy yield up some technical principles; and since it is high time for fiction to be enumerating its principles I will venture to phrase them roughly.

The author escapes from immediate self-portraiture, the thing that vitiated all the pre-fiction forms, and much of the fiction of the long intermediate stage in the development of this difficult art, by a very practicable device: by employing the special reporter who is already in the story, and who can give us the competent official version of it. Mrs. Wharton sent in a special reporter to present her story of Ethan Frome; everybody in fiction nowadays employs him. It is a device aiming at an effective if not a theoretical objectivity. The mind of the reporter is objective with respect to the mind of the author, which is not in evidence at all; it is given subjectively or internally, in the respect that it is his view of the events of the story which we follow; we are in his confidence, in his thoughts. If authors do not want a special reporter, and yet do not want to appear as their own reporters, they must fall back upon a behaviouristic or dramatic kind of fiction, all business and dialogue, with nobody's thoughts appearing; but they would as well turn to drama itself, or to moving pictures, for all the benefit they receive from the peculiar possibilities of fiction. The principal material of fiction is the inner life of minds under the stress of situations. A behaviouristic fiction is an enormous voluntary limitation of fiction-substance; and in any event it is not common as a thoroughgoing method and does not compete seriously with the fiction which deals in mental facts.

There should be a special narrator or reporter for every story. That is the general principle to which fiction has come. Beyond that we need to ask mainly what his qualifications for the rôle should be. I shall indicate them briefly, entering the reservation that they are really subject to extended discussion.

He should be suitably placed. Otherwise he can not acquire the story in its completeness; he must participate in the action, and have his own personal interest in its outcome. I have always felt that Conrad's Marlow is far too professional and unattached as a narrator; there is very little advantage in the author's putting a Marlow on the scene to study it as against the author's being there in his own person; we are too conscious of narrative technique.

He should be represented in the third person rather than in the first. James has remarked on this qualification. There are disabilities in the sense of being party of the first part that kept many personal narratives from being fiction in the days before fiction, and postponed the original conception of a true art of fiction. The technique of presenting a mind in the third person is of course syntactically and typographically easy; it is in fact simpler than the use of the first person.

He should be single rather than plural. This is perhaps a counsel of perfection, for many good novelists do not hold by it. They enter in turn a variety of minds in order to present the situation comprehensively. But this comes from having too many and too easy sympathies. Particularly, it comes from having too much sympathy with readers, and wanting to apprise them of the real nature of riddling events by showing them quickly what it will take the principal reporter by himself a long time to learn; and thus they destroy their own effect of suspense. The unity of illusion is the condition of suspense, and the single reporter is the condition of this unity. Nowadays this principle is disputed mainly by critics who cannot consent to any disparagement of their Russians; that is, of Tolstoi. But Tolstoi has excellences enough without requiring all that are on Aristotle's list. The story must focus, and it must take its time. James in *The Ambassadors* by the technique of the single reporter prolonged the suspense and heightened the unity beyond anything, we imagine, that can be found in fiction elsewhere; he prolonged it provokingly, and may be considered to have performed the service of showing the ultimate limits of withheld information; yet he never failed to give us the mind of the reporter occupied at every moment up to its entire capacity.

Finally, he should be equal in sensibility and equipment to the author. And here we return to the problem of Mrs. Wharton's. She says in her Preface about this:

> It appears to me, indeed, that, while an air of artificiality is lent to a tale of complex and sophisticated people which the novelist causes to be guessed at and interpreted by any mere looker-on, there need be no such drawback if the looker-on is sophisticated, and the people he interprets are simple.

But I believe it is impossible to accept her argument. It is a real question whether psychology is acquainted with any minds which may be said to be simple, or at any rate what is meant by their simplicity. Learned persons cannot ordinarily enter ignorant minds with understanding, though teachers might have a better success if it were possible. And nothing is harder for the professional psychologist than to define what really happens in the mind of infants and children. The late acquisitions of our minds become as natural to us as the early ones, and in fact second nature appears if anything to govern us more strictly than first nature; to be wholly its substitute. Mrs. Wharton's own special reporter, who was herself in disguise, did not suceed very brilliantly in making Ethan's mind real to us.

The device of the special reporter, conceived with this last qualification, seems climactic in the development of the technique of fiction. It protects the moral and the aesthetic integrity of the artist at the same time. The two powerful loyalties which pull upon the novelist in opposite directions are, first, the obligation to be himself, of which the importance is axiomatic and categorical – the obligation just to be himself, and give of himself; and second, the obligation to be the other, or the non-self, to cease to be the subject in order to enter the object. This latter may be a mystical principle but it seems basic in our constitution. So the arts appear to exist in order to preserve the pure individual objects, and to be examples of that kind of innocence which can interest itself in pure objects; but they cannot intend the immolation of the artists who are themselves objects. The two obligations theoretically clash and destroy each other, but actually they are of mutual re-inforcement; they dictate one and the same course, they write one and the same story, when the object situation is experienced by a special narrator created by the author somewhat in his own image. This is the form of fiction. Neither the moralist nor the innocent lover of art can impeach it.

President Roosevelt and War

Hoffman Nickerson

In the hullabaloo of discussion over the New Deal, it is only recently, comparatively, that much attention has been paid to foreign affairs. Since practically all Americans desire peace, they have been most willing to believe that the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy is peaceful both in intention and result. Only within the last few months, the Administration's headlong anxiety to outdo the League of Nations itself in blockading Italy under the guise of sanctions has begun to show people that we are to be pushed into the next war not near its end, as in 1917, but at its beginning. As a matter of fact this has been the policy of our State Department for some years, under Hoover and Stimson as under Roosevelt and Hull. Let us look at the record.

Both Europe and Asia are close to war. Storm signals are out not only in the Mediterranean but in Germany and China, and the weather reports look very, very bad. Both storm centers were already formed before Roosevelt took office; it was under Hoover that Japan set up the new state of Manchukuo and Norman Davis went to the endless disarmament-rearmament conference in Geneva. Hoover and Stimson were not conspicuously successful either in their dealings with Asia or with Europe, but Roosevelt, although he has varied a little from the unhappy Hoover-Stimson policy in Asia, has gone straight ahead on Hoover-Stimson lines in Europe – under circumstances which have made his course more and more dangerous.

In Asia, when Japan made Pu-Yi emperor of Manchukuo, China as a member of the League of Nations protested to the League that her territory was being taken from her. Notwithstanding various treaties drawn since 1911 when the unhappy Chinese Republic replaced the Manchu dynasty, those who know the Far East agree that Manchuria was never truly a part of "China", it was the personal estate of the Manchu emperors in which there had always been a few Chinese whose numbers had greatly increased through recent immigration. Nevertheless, the treaties existed, and the whole object of the League's existence was to deal with just such matters as the Chinese complaint. Its members were bound to preserve each other's territorial integrity, but all that the League Council did in fulfillment of their sworn duty in the matter was to tell Japan very solemnly that she must evacuate Manchuria by November 16, 1931. When Japan shood pat, the League backed down completely, for the three European naval powers, England, France, and Italy, were neither singly nor collectively willing to go up against her strong strategic position in the Far East.

At this point, enter Hoover and Stimson. For a long time the British had been telling the world that they hesitated to pledge their fleet to the League because we were not members and they were unwilling to risk a quarrel with America. Our Quaker President and his Secretary of State may have believed this, for by invitation of the League Council they directed the United States Consul in Geneva to sit with that body and act with it on Manchuria. This, said Stimson, the United States were bound to do because the Kellogg treaties "outlawing" war as a measure of national policy had abolished neutrality! The move was weak; the Japanese paid no more attention to the League plus the United States than they had to the League alone. It was provocative because it centered Japanese resentment on America – the League members were bound by their membership to take some sort of action whereas the United States had gone out of their way to do so.

The situation became such that it seemed wise to send the whole United States fleet into the Pacific. Meanwhile Hoover and Stimson proclaimed that America would never recognize any change in territorial sovereignty brought about by force in defiance of existing treaties. Unfortunately this was a principle which no longer meant much. When the Balkan States attacked Turkey in 1912, the great powers had begun by saying they would never recognize any change in boundaries and had ended by accepting the consequences of Turkish defeat, and since 1918 the Italians have successfully seized Fiume, the Poles have taken Vilna, and several other such cases are on record. The net result of proclaiming the "Stimson doctrine" was to be seen only in America where some of the most deeply dyed-in-the-wool Republicans wavered in their faith; in Europe and Asia no change was visible.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the picture was no brighter. Our own time, after talking gayly of perpetual peace, has not even been able to end the last war. The treaty of Versailles is neither a peace of reconciliation nor one of destruction; it has amputated and angered Prussianized Germany but has done nothing to destroy Prussia's authority throughout what is left of Bismarck's Empire. Consequently Versailles has produced only an uneasy truce, preserved by the disarmament of the Germans together with the armaments of France and her allies. Also the treaties of 1919 have notoriously not satisfied Italy.

In Europe everything that Hoover and Stimson did was pro-British. Before the Five-Power Naval Conference met at London in 1930, Hoover and MacDonald, sitting on their celebrated log at the Rapidan, had agreed on Anglo-American equality in cruisers. But the British also wanted a fleet equal to those of any two other European navies, which in practice meant France plus Italy. Accordingly Hoover and Stimson tried to limit the size of the French fleet, and the French countered by asking whether the United States would sign a "Consultative Pact", *i. e.*, a treaty binding us to consult with the other naval powers in case of a threatened war within certain areas. When Stimson fiddled with this idea, such a howl was raised at home that Hoover backed down, so abruptly that he came near disowning his own Secretary of State; after four years the question of Franco-Italian naval ratios remains exactly where it was.

Much the same thing happened with regard to the moratorium of 1931: in the hope of saving the large American and British short-term loans to Germany, Hoover tried to bully the French into accepting a year's delay in the payment of all inter-governmental debts. The French, who had been wise enough not to lend to the Germans, refused to be bullied; they checkmated the Quaker President merely by postponing their acceptance of his proposal long enough to make sure that the Anglo-American short-term loans to Germany were hopelessly frozen.

Taking no warning from experience, toward the end of his term Hoover plunged into the Geneva Disarmament Conference. While avoiding naval questions in which the United States has a real share, he sought to interfere in the affairs of peoples a hundred times more exposed to land and air attack than his own country. He committed the American delegation to the principle of "qualitative" disarmament, *i. e.*, the astonishing idea that deadly weapons can be divided into offensive and defensive categories irrespective of the moral and political purposes for which they are used. Naturally the French group, seeing themselves directly threatened by the proposed closing of the gap which separated their armed strength from Germany's, wanted to know whether America would help to safeguard the situation she was trying to bring about. The reply was vague; a few days before the presidential election of 1932 Norman Davis was refusing the French "the joint use of force" against an aggressor, while Stimson was telling a Methodist conference in Pittsburgh of the great and successful labours of himself and Hoover for peace, especially their progress toward disarming the wicked Europeans! Even an electioneering speech should not be wholly divorced from fact. A more accurate comment on the real situation had been made by Mencken in *The American Mercury* a few months before: "No one seems to be shocked any more when the Secretary of State horns into another row at the far side of the world, and gets another kick in the pantaloons for his pains."

Such were the foreign policies which the Roosevelt administration inherited. Their lack of result and the reasons for it were all too plain. Any schoolboy will tell you not to shake your fist at a fellow unless you are prepared to fight him; the other boy laughs and goes ahead as before, whereupon others laugh at you. Sitting firmly on the spoils of successful land-grabbing in Texas, California, and Panama, the United States are in no position to "schoolmarm" a proud nation like Japan over Manchuria. If we are not going to fight her, it would be wiser and more dignified not to provoke her. Before we, secure behind our oceans, tell France, the chief military power in Europe, to disarm it would be well to ask ourselves what guarantees we are prepared to give the French if they weaken themselves by accepting our proposal. No wonder then, that in March, 1933, practically all Americans interested in world affairs, dissatisfied with the provocative weakness of Hoover and Stimson, hoped that the incoming President would not try to deal with other countries on the principle of having his cake and eating it too. After more than two years what is the record?

As regards Japan, Roosevelt's actions have somewhat eased the tension. He authorized naval construction to bring the United States fleet up to treaty strength, thus quietly reminding Japan that America's longer purse will keep us as far ahead of her as we choose. He signed a bill for the evacuation of America's distant and strategically untenable outpost in the

Philippines in ten years, thus strengthening the United States' strategic position and showing a lack of imperialist ambition in the Far East. Thus Roosevelt's attitude is less warlike than Hoover's and American strength is already greater. So far so good, but these moves do not constitute a policy. They seem not to have reassured Japan and obviously they have not restrained her. Although the corpse of the "Stimson Doctrine" of non-recognition has been shot full of holes by Roosevelt's recognition of Soviet Russia, it is not clear whether the United States are still insisting on that doctrine in China. But if the Brain Trusters know where they are going in the Far East, certainly no other American does.

Nor does the President's course in Europe suggest that he will be wise in Asia. Everyone knows the familiar – and historically quite untrue – saying that the restored Bourbons had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Unfortunately every European move of Roosevelt's has shown all too clearly that he has learned little and forgotten much that he should have remembered. First of all he forgot the failures of his predecessor at Geneva, for he has repeated Hoover's Genevan blunder of treating disarmament and peace as if these were moral questions instead of the political problems they really are. One would not like to suppose that he thinks it easy and safe to play with the uninformed but genuine American pacifism still surviving twenty years after 1914. However this may be, as the red line on the political fever-chart of Europe has steadily risen, he has long out-Hoovered Hoover in optimistic press statements about his hopes for arms cuts. He continued that curious person Mr.

Norman Davis as American representative at the Geneva Conference. Since Mr. Davis had been on Morgan's "preferred list", it seems queer that the administration did not believe him possessed of diabolic horns, hoofs, and a forked tail. But to this no attention was paid, nor to the charge of so well-informed a Congressman as George Holden Tinkham who said that a court had held Davis guilty of improper conduct as a trustee.

In the spring of 1933, however, it was still possible to hope that the President was following Hoover's course at the Disarmament Conference only because he did not wish to break too abruptly with his predecessor's policy. That hope was soon dashed. In April the press was told that the United States agreed with France and England in opposing German rearmament. A few weeks later the President sent a circular to all the governments participating in the world economic and disarmament conferences calling for a world-wide non-aggression treaty and for the abolition of all weapons arbitrarily labelled "aggressive". Since Japan had so recently put her foot through the existing Kellogg treaties, and since the absurdity of dividing deadly weapons into "aggressive" and "defensive" classes was by this time clear to most educated people, it would be an insult both to Roosevelt's native intelligence and to his Groton and Harvard schooling to believe that he took these suggestions seriously. Even the London *Times*, in spite of its usual anxiety to seem to side with America, remarked that armaments were a symptom rather than a fundamental cause of European unrest. Still the President's action was defensible on the ground of absorption in economic and in domestic affairs, plus a belief in fair words to keep Germany from rearming. If so he was soon to be undeceived by the little Austrian ex-corporal who now governs Germany.

May was a month of cross purposes both in Washington and Geneva. Switzerland and six other small powers wanted to know how far the United States would go in enforcing peace against a European or Asiatic aggressor, and a prominent Democratic senator, the Democratic whip of the Senate and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said we would never abandon our neutral rights. Norman Davis then stated the President's policy as follows:

> "We are willing to consult the other states in case of a threat to peace with a view to averting conflict. Further . . . in the event that the states in conference, determine that a state has been guilty of a breach of the peace in violation of its international obligations, and take measures against the violator, then, if we concur in the judgement rendered as to the responsible and guilty party, we will refrain from any action tending to defeat such collective effort which the states made us make to restore peace."

If this did not promise the abandonment of American neutrality then it is hard to see what it did mean. On the other hand, just at the moment Hitler was putting on the soft pedal. Accordingly it was still possible for Norman Davis to draw fine distinctions as to how far America would promise to use force against future treaty-breakers, how far we would or would not be neutral. . . . Before now, little boys have played with guns which they did not know were loaded.

In the early summer of 1934 a grave warning was delivered by a chief American authority on international law. John Bassett Moore, a former judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice, said in a widely quoted article "the law of neutrality merely applies the rule of common honesty. Parties to an armed conflict are entitled to know who are in it and who are not." He then went on to characterize the Roosevelt-Davis half-neutrality in terms of grave and serious warning: "No matter how it is viewed, the demand that the law of neutrality shall be considered as obsolete is so visionary, so confused, so somnambulistic that no concession to it can be rationally made."

Late in August Norman Davis started again for Geneva announcing that the President had a "profound understanding of the disarmament problem". After a few more weeks of fiddling and fussing, Hitler abruptly took Germany out of both Disarmament Conference and League. The German case was clear: in the treaty of Versailles Germany's disarmament was said to be "the initiation of a general limitation in the armaments of all nations" and this limitation had not been made. Nor was the move original with Hitler; nearly two years before the Allies' pet Bruening, then German Chancellor, had insisted on arms equality in terms milder than Hitler's but equally definite. Geneva and the world had had plenty of warning that the disarmament gun was loaded. Now it had gone off with a bang and killed the Conference dead.

The first sound heard after the explosion was a loud wailing by the professional pacifists of the world.

They were in good practice for they had been kept at it without much let-up since Japan had begun kicking the League around. Next there began a great scurrying of diplomats. London and Paris press despatches announced that the old diplomatic front of 1918 had been reformed, with France, England, *and* America in the front rank. At this Americans without distinction of race, creed, or colour began furiously to think. Unanimously the newspapers of the country sounded the retreat, blowing such a blast on their editorial trumpets that the card castle of administration foreign policy fell flat.

Changing his tune, Norman Davis announced "We are at Geneva solely for disarmament purposes. While there is a possibility of successfully carrying on disarmament negotiations we will gladly continue to do our part." Alas, the sweet phrase, "do our part" reminds us of the N. R. A. blue eagle with his claws firmly fixed in the liver of the small American businessman. It might have been wiser not to use just those words. Our Ambassador-at-Large continued: "We are not, however, interested in the political element or any purely European aspect of the picture."

Since the existence of every cannon in Europe is obviously a political question, this statement simply does not make sense. Even suave Walter Lippmann wrote: "There is no good in resorting to rhetoric in the face of Germany's action. The possible results are too serious." Frank Simonds, the ablest American writer on foreign affairs, wrote a public letter headed "On the Burning Deck at Geneva" asking

How can we be kept out of war if we continue to meddle where we will not accept responsibility and cannot otherwise exert influence? What is the use of going on pretending that paper promises, Kellogg Pacts, and other similar parchments have any relation to a situation in which great and free peoples feel their very existence is at stake? Europe is about to fight over questions which the United States has fought about in the past and would again fight about.

Norman Davis himself, returning to America in November, admitted that a trivial frontier incident might set Europe ablaze.

But in December, 1934, the President said to the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Foundation: "The blame for the danger of the world peace lies not in the world population but in the political leaders of that population." The good old Wilson antithesis between virtuous peoples and wicked governments, between saintly, peaceful nations and diabolical, militaristic nations, rising again in all its glory undismayed by all the stubborn facts! Not only in Germany but everywhere opinion today is nationalistic. If anyone denies it, we can only wonder where he has been for the last twenty years. Everywhere nationalistic statesmen are praised and re-elected; if any of them tried to put international interests before those of his own country, his political head would be instantly chopped off. Not so long ago when the President himself first insisted that the Economic Conference should meet and then used it to slap the gold-bloc nations in the face, public opinion supported him and blamed the wicked foreigners.

In private conversation, supporters of Roosevelt's European policy defend it on the ground that it is not what it seems. Oh yes, they say, of course disarmament is all nonsense but the beauty of the Geneva Conference is that it gives us such a splendid opportunity to discuss our political questions with the Europeans. In other words, President Roosevelt has not been content to borrow Woodrow Wilson's vocabulary, he has also copied the methods of his old Chief by making Norman Davis his Colonel House. Like House, Davis is both Ambassador-at-Large and personal representative of the President, gumshoeing from one European capital to another as a secret agent trying to prevent the next war as House tried to stop the last. The dangers of long, secret negotiations are all too plain. The history of diplomacy is dotted with their skeletons, from the King's Secret Agents who went behind the backs of the regular Ministers and Ambassadors to bedevil the diplomacy of the declining French monarchy, to the secret Franco-British Naval Agreement which suddenly bobbed up like a jack-in-the-box and pushed England over the edge in 1914. It wasn't a formidable-sounding agreement, it did not pledge England to war in so many words, only bound her to protect the French Atlantic coast in case of war. But it was an unneutral act which compelled England either to fight or to dishonour the signatures of her Admiralty and Foreign Office. Notwithstanding repeated failure, such negotiations have again proved irresistibly tempting to statesmen who think they are spinning cobwebs until some fine day they wake and find these suddenly turned into wire ropes. President Roosevelt has apparently forgotten that Colonel House, like Norman Davis, was the confidential spokesman of a half-neutral policy, a policy which rightly or wrongly defended American neutral rights far more zealously against Germany than against England. Has he forgotten the result of that policy? Did Wilson and House keep America out of war? Are Franklin Roosevelt and Norman Davis so much wiser and subtler than their predecessors?

Thus, even before the present Italian-British clash, before our State Department became more anti-Italian than the British themselves – using "pressure" to keep Americans from exercising their legal right to sell oil to Italy as British companies are freely doing – before all these things, Roosevelt and Norman Davis had made their policy perfectly clear. By permission of John Bassett Moore I quote from a letter by his distinguished pen:

> It is not easy to characterize "The New Neutrality", if one knows anything either of law or of history. In view of the fact that our shipping was swept from the seas during our Civil War as the result of a lax neutrality rather than of a deliberate or emotional unneutrality, it seems to be peculiarly discreditable that there should now be proposed to us, under the name of peace or any other name, a so-called neutrality the chief characteristic of which is to be a rotating duplicity until some power which we have injured by it opens a justified fire upon us as an actual enemy.

If we Americans are to help the peace of the world against all and sundry, then let us really do so by joining the European powers in a treaty which would pledge American armed force against any attempt to change present European boundaries. The commitment might be limited in time, say to five years. Also, the military and naval aid to be given might be limited in amount so that the United States would not have to take more than their fair share of any joint action. The present writer is not arguing in favour of such a treaty, far from it. Neither American public opinion nor the Senate would be in a hurry to accept it – the desire to stay out of a fight when one can is natural and very strong. Even if the treaty were signed, no one could be certain that all the signers would honour it, some would probably wriggle and evade the issue exactly as all the powers did when the Italians took Fiume, as the League of Nations did when the Italians bombarded Corfu, when the Poles took Vilna, and when the Japanese went into Manchuria. As these lines are written in December, 1935, it is by no means certain how many nations would really fight Italy as allies of England. Nevertheless such a treaty would at least be a consistent, straightforward line to take, and if the world thought its signers sincere then it might postpone the coming conflict.

The present writer, in agreement, so he believes, with almost all Americans, would prefer to see the United States follow a course of moderate nationalism, keeping up their strength so as not to invite attack while avoiding policies likely to collide with other countries. When we build up our navy and at the same time promise to leave the Philippines we are acting both wisely and peaceably. But if America is to be nationalistic, and unwilling to take on a definite European commitment, then it can have no concern whatsoever with Europe's armaments, for these are political questions in which only definite commitments matter. If the United States will not promise beforehand to join future wars which do not directly concern them, then it is mere, plain duty to be neutral both in words and in acts.

How long it will take President Roosevelt and Norman Davis to discover that there can be no halfway house between neutrality and war, no one can tell – although either Signor Mussolini or Herr Hitler might make a good guess. Meanwhile, to fumble about in Europe, meddling while refusing responsibility for the results of meddling, promising to give up neutrality one day and back-tracking the day after, is neither dignified nor honourable. If the argument from honour does not appeal to an administration which has dishonoured the nation's contracts by waltzing gayly off the gold standard, then there is the further argument that weakly puttering about in the Europe of today is not safe. Far from postponing war in Europe, it only makes the United States more and more likely to be ignominiously kicked into the next war which they will have done nothing to avert, nothing to avoid, and much to provoke.

Art in Relation to Industrialism

ERIC GILL

(An address to the London County Council School Teachers)

IN SPITE of the fact that most of you will have been to many lectures on art, and all of you live in an industrial civilization, I shall politely assume that none of you know what either art or industrialism is. In fact we must begin at the beginning and endeavour to establish quite elementary notions as to the nature of things. And this is especially necessary today because in our civilization we have placed a great gulf between those who work at the thing we call art and all other workers. I shall endeavour to show you that this is one of the fundamental evils of our time, and it is in order to make that demonstration that it is necessary to go back to the beginning.

As you all know, the word "Art" in the dictionary has quite a simple meaning; it means simply "*skill*". Thus we use the word art in common speech when we call a person "*artful*", and when we speak of the "*art*" *of cooking*, the "*art*" *of government*, or the "*art*" *of living*. But, it is quite obvious, you cannot be skillful about nothing; you cannot just be skillful. Skill must be applied to something, so, by the word art, we mean first of all skill in *doing*. To get a nail to go into a wall without damaging either the nail or the wall requires considerable skill. So hanging pictures and suchlike jobs are, as we say, "quite an art", and therefore a man who makes a good job of them is, as we say, "quite an artist". From this it becomes clear that the word "art" soon takes on a meaning of more than merely skill in *doing* and comes to mean skill in *making* – to do a thing skillfully is to make a good job of it. The deed comes to be regarded as a thing in itself done well or ill. So that although in its primary sense art means simply skill, and therefore first of all skill in doing, it has come to mean chiefly skill in making, and therefore we may say that a work of art is a thing well-made, and "the artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist".*

How then has it come about that, although the word art still means skill in making and we still commonly use such phrases as "the art of cooking", when we hear the word "art" by itself we thing of something quite different? We think immediately of pictures and sculptures and perhaps music and poetry and fine buildings, and we do not think of any ordinary workman or any ordinary work. How has it come about that the people we call artists today are not just all those people who make things, but those special people who make pictures and poems and musical tunes and fine buildings? Why should we say, for instance, that such a building as St. Paul's Cathedral, and even this County Hall, are works of art, but that the plain factory chimney and the Forth Bridge are not?

I feel sure that you will all be saying to yourselves immediately that the difference between St. Paul's

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* Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Cathedral and a factory chimney is that the former is beautiful and the latter is not. Or perhaps you will be saying that the Cathedral is *meant* to be beautiful, was made beautiful *on purpose*, whereas a factory chimney is only beautiful, if it is beautiful, by *accident*. And therefore you will say that the difference between art and not-art is the difference between beautiful and not-beautiful. Now this is really a very curious phenomenon because, as you will admit, the word art does not in itself mean anything to do with beauty. We have suddenly and gratuitously introduced a notion of beauty; we were not thinking about it at all; we were thinking about doing and making, and skill in doing and making, and we said a work of art was a thing well-made, and we agreed about this because that is in accordance with the common use of words. And now we say quite suddenly that a quite well-made factory chimney or a quite well-made iron bridge is not a work of art, but a cathedral about whose making we may be very doubtful, for we have heard stories about great cracks in it, and a county hall, about whose making we know at least this, that the classical architecture which appears on the outside has little or nothing to do with its construction, are works of art. And we say this simply because we do not think the bridge or chimney are beautiful, or not particularly so, but we do think the cathedral is, or we have been taught to think so – at any rate it was put up with that intention.

Have we then got to reconsider our whole language? Have we got to say that the word "art" does not mean skill, skill in doing, skill in making, and that a work of art is not simply a thing well-made, and that the artist is not simply a good workman? Have we got to say that the word "art" means something to do with beauty? Or have we got to admit that the word "art" has two quite distinct and different meanings?

Before we go any further it would be a good thing to discover what we mean by the word "beauty". And though it is possible to write long books on the subject and to make the matter extremely complicated, there is no difficulty about the simple meaning of the word. "Beautiful things are those which please when seen." The beautiful gives pleasure; the beautiful is the pleasing. Whatever pleases us we call beautiful. That is simple enough, and to say that the beautiful is that which being seen pleases is in accordance with our common speech, provided that we understand the word "seeing", both actually and metaphorically. Thus we may say: beautiful chocolates are those which please when tasted; the smell of the violet is beautiful; swansdown is beautiful to touch; the song of the lark is beautiful to hear. And we may say that all these things are seen because they are seen by the inner eye, the mind is pleased, and that is chiefly what we mean by the beautiful, that is, a pleasure of the mind. That is why the word "seen" is the best word to use, because it more clearly indicates the action of the mind, so that we say: "O taste and *see* how gracious the Lord is." We do not mean that we must taste the grace of God with the tongue, or see it with the eye, but we must enjoy it with our minds. So although the word "beautiful" is loosely applied to things which please physically, things which we do not think much about as, for instance, beautiful chocolates, even so the pleasure is a mixed one and not purely physical, and it is as human beings that we are pleased even by chocolates. And there are few pleasures enjoyed by human beings, indeed it is doubtful if there are any, which are not chiefly pleasures of the mind. For even eating and drinking are capable of giving much more than mere physical satisfaction, and do give much more, so that we take great pains to make food and drink more than simply nourishing. And in fact it is only a starving man who does not enjoy his food. We have to be reduced to inhuman conditions before the mind ceases to function.

So the word beautiful may be said to mean pleasing to the mind. Perhaps now we shall be able to understand how it has come about that we call cathedrals works of art, but not factory chimneys; that we call painted pictures works of art, but not plain painted walls; that we call the architect and the painter artists, but not the bricklayer or the "painter and decorator". For now at once we see before us our civilization, and whether we think it good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, we see at a glance that this civilization is one in which the idea of the artist as being the ordinary workman is absurd. And if anyone says "the artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist" you can all immediately see that he must be talking about an entirely different world from ours.

I shall assume that you are all well-informed students of history; that you know how our present situation has been arrived at. Let me describe it.

The ruling power in our world is the financial power. The richest man is the most powerful man.

Those who control money and credit control the lives and works of everybody else. As the present Pope has said:

> ". . . it is patent that in our days not [only] is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few . . . and those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure. This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood of the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were in their hands, the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will. . . . This accumulation of power, the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of limitless free competition, which permits the survival of those who are strongest, which often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."*

And in such a world all things are made for sale. That is their primary purpose. Although we buy things to use them, that is not why they are made, nor is it why they are sold.

Consider, for instance, the fact that an enormous part of modern manufacture is in the hands of joint stock companies, things we call limited liability companies, and note in passing what those words signify. Limited liability! What is it that is limited? The liability of the shareholder. He is liable to lose the money he has subscribed and no more. It is entirely a question of money.

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* Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno.*

Now a joint stock company is one in which a body of people have put their money in the hope that they will share in the profits. Profits are obtained by selling things at a higher price than they cost to produce. If the things sold cannot be sold at a profit the factory will be shut down. This is obvious, for the lenders or subscribers of money will not lend without payment. And it should be equally obvious therefore that the ruling consideration with the board of directors must be a financial one.

It is true that unless the goods turned out will satisfy the needs of those who buy, the people will not buy them, and therefore a certain attention to the quality of things made is forced upon the manufacturer, and of course he makes the most of this in his advertisements. But it remains equally clear that in rendering this service his one aim is to produce a profit for his shareholders.

It is true that the majority of small shareholders have not much influence with the directors. The bulk of the shares is usually held by a few big people, and small shareholders seldom attend shareholders' meetings, knowing that their votes count very little. So that, although on the face of it joint stock companies are run by all those who have shares, in practice they are run by the few chief shareholders, and their object is simply profits.

The development of joint stock companies is, of course, intimately connected with the development of machine production. Machinery costs a great deal to make and set up, factory buildings cost a great deal of money, immediate returns are not to be looked for, hence the need of capital. And it is obvious that there are very few private individuals who have sufficient capital to start a big factory entirely on their own, and very few who are willing to undertake the risk. It is easier to collect money from a large number of people, or from a few big banks, especially if the risks are limited. The impersonal quality of modern manufacture is the result of both these things. That is to say, things made by machinery are impersonal, and the management of business is also impersonal. Thus it has come about that it is true to say that the mark of our industrialism is that things are not made for use, but for sale.

So far we have discussed the matter taking man for granted. But it is necessary at this point to consider man more particularly. We asked: What is art? What is beauty? What is industrialism? We must now ask: What is man? We must answer first by saying that man is matter and spirit, or, to give the word "spirit" a more definite meaning, let us say, man is matter and mind. And by the word "mind" we must understand both intellect and will, and we must remember that those faculties are only separable categorically; they are not separable in actuality. The will cannot function without the intelligence (you cannot will what you do not know), and the intelligence cannot function without the will (you cannot know even the smallest, the least thing without a prompting of the will).

I shall assume that you accept the distinction between matter and mind. Matter is what can be measured; you can have a pound of tea, or twelve inches of string. But mind is immeasurable; you cannot speak of love or hate, will or fear, in terms of measurement.

So we say man is matter and mind, both real and both good. And in a discussion of art and the beautiful, and of the relations between art and industrialism, we have to remember that it is as these things concern man that they are important.

Let us recapitulate. We find that the word "art" is used in several ways, all of which are derived from its original meaning of skill, skill in making. We still use the word to mean simply the thing made skillfully, as when we speak of the art of the dentist. But in the course of time we have come to use the word specially for those things which, though involving skill in their making, are chiefly notable for the pleasure they give us. These useless works, when we speak carefully, we call works of "*fine*" *art*, to distinguish them from works of art in general and useful works in particular, and so notorious and much talked about have works of "fine" art become that the word art now commonly means only "fine" art. Formerly it was said (the phrase is W. R. Lethaby's): "Art is the well making of what needs making." Now it is agreed (the phrase is Oscar Wilde's): "All art is useless", and so instead of saying: "Art is the well making of what needs making", we may now say: "Art is the well making of what *doesn't* need making."

Now works of "fine" art may be divided into two kinds. There is, first of all, that kind which exists simply for its own sake. In this class must be included all reproductions, whether portraits, landscapes, or subject pictures, and also all those things which, though they do not seem to be valuable by reason of their likeness to anything, are, nevertheless, valuable in themselves. As, for instance, the works of some modern painters of the "Post-Impressionist" schools. All these works have for their chief claim to existence the fact that they please. We are pleased to have a portrait of so-and-so, or a landscape representing such-and-such a scene, and we are pleased to have a painting by, shall we say, Señor Picasso, not because it reminds us of anything, but because its form and colour are in themselves pleasing to us.

And the second kind of fine art is what is called "decorative" art; that is, paintings and sculptures which we have, not simply for their own sakes, but for the good of something else. Thus, for instance we have decorative painting and decorative sculptures, and both these kinds of fine art exist, not because they perform any physically useful function, but for the pleasure they give us.

We have then, a notion of art, that it consists of two kinds of things: first, useful things, and secondly, pleasing things. And we separate these two kinds of art, as though they were naturally quite distinct. This is a very grave error, and it is an error largely due to our forgetfulness of the nature of man. And it is an error greatly accentuated by our industrial civilization, and that industrialism itself is a development largely due to our forgetfulness of man's nature.

We said man is matter and mind, both real and both good. What we forget is that these things are inseparable — so in man, matter and spirit are inseparable. Matter can be conceived to exist without mind; mind can be conceived to exist without matter; but man can only be conceived to exist as a combination of the two. And as man consists of matter and mind and the two are inseparable, so civilization has its material and spiritual components and they also are inseparable. And so, also, every work of man is similarly compounded. Nothing that a man can make is purely material or purely spiritual. A table, for instance, is not like a crystal, a fortuitous concourse of atoms, or whatever the latest terms are. The top and legs of a table do not come together as the result of purely physical causes. They do not assemble themselves, and their design is not simply the product of mechanical laws. But the tendency for industrial products is to become more and more mechanical and inhuman. A table made by a man is a product of matter and mind, but a table produced in accordance with the conditions of machine production is one in which the functional necessities outweigh all others. Thus it is that the French architect Le Corbusier was able to say that "a house is a machine to live in". And thus it is that the best industrial products are like works of nature, and the beauty of such things is the beauty of bones, of butterfly wings, of crystals. There is a kind of beauty in such things, it is the beauty of functional adaptation. So that of industrial products it is becoming very nearly true to say, and it should eventually become quite true to say, that such things are in fact simply the product of material laws, just as crystals and bones are.

But the alternative to materialism is not simply subjectivism, aestheticism, idealism. . . . A table is not simply an immaterial idea existing in the mind. A sort of vision of it exists, or is created, in the mind, but that idea has to be expressed, manifested, transformed or translated into the material, measurable, physical terms of wood or metal. And the same applies to any other work of man; even so predominantly mental a thing as poetry is not separable from a material embodiment. Ideas are embodied in words, and sounds are embodied in this or that rhythmical or metrical arrangement, and they are spoken or written or printed. And this embodiment is not solely in order that others may share or use the poet's ideas, the embodiment is also due to the fact that the poet imagines his poem thus embodied and delights in that embodiment for its own sake.

This, as the theologians teach, is as it was in the beginning. "God looked on what he had made *and saw that it was good.*" And as it says in the Book of Wisdom: "My delight was to *play* before Him all day", meaning that wisdom's highest activity has the nature of delightfulness rather than utility.

Now we say man is matter and mind, or matter and spirit, and it is the mind or spirit which is the predominant partner, the ruling partner. And if we wish to say in a nutshell what is wrong with industrialism, we may say: what is wrong with industrialism is that it is a contrivance or arrangement of things compounded, as everything that man makes must be, of matter and mind, but one in which the *matter* is predominant. It is a material rule. The rule of the King is a fiction, the influence of Christian ministers, high and low, "established" or unestablished, is a very secondary consideration; the ruling power is the power of money, the power of commerce, the power of material.

The development of industrialism, as we see it before us on all sides, bears this out. The development of machinery is precisely the development which is in conformity with the materialist rule. The whole point of machinery, its reason for existence, is quantitative. Machines do not exist to make things better, but simply to make them in larger quantities, more quickly, and at less cost in human labour. We may, as do all children and schoolboys, like machinery very much. I suppose there are few people in the world who are not, to some extent, fascinated and delighted by wheels and contrivances. Who is not impressed by such a thing as a railway locomotive, by its power and grandeur and by the genius and ingenuity of its construction? It is not necessary for me to speak at length about the wonders of machines. It is not necessary for me to stir up your enthusiasm, to rouse your emotions. I may take it for granted that all this is understood, and you may take it for granted that I appreciate machinery in itself as much as anyone. But nothing I can say, and nothing anyone else can say, could make any difference to the fact that the object of machinery is not to make things better, but simply to make them more and more quickly and more and more cheaply. And it is not as though we were in full control of the matter, and were able to say, thus far and no farther, for we are witnessing nowadays not the control of machines by men, but the control of men by machines. "Machinery has come to stay," they say, and they mean that they cannot conceive of any power on earth that could stop it.

Every day, every moment, fresh improvements are being made, more and more machines are becoming automatic, as they call it, that is to say, the human workman is becoming less and less necessary. More and more the human workman is becoming simply a minder or tender of machinery, and less and less is he responsible for the form and quality of what the machine turns out. For that form and quality the designer of the machines is alone responsible, and even he is working at the dictation, not of his own conscience, but of the financial and commercial powers which employ him.

For the majority of workers, then, today, we have brought it about that it is nearly true to say that the work they do has no spiritual quality whatever. Man is matter and spirit, and his works are normally compounded, as he is, of matter and spirt. But under industrialism we have contrived a system in which man, the workman, is purely material (that is to say, as nearly as possible, for we cannot completely eradicate his nature), and his spiritual nature must find occupation, satisfaction, and assuagement when he is not working. Hence the problem which is called "the problem of the leisure state", the problem, that is, of how to contrive that man's spiritual needs shall be satisfied in a world in which only his material needs are satisfied by what he works at to earn a living.

But in the last three centuries during which this Industrial System has been developing, other things have been developing also. As in all human affairs, no one thing has a complete control. The idea of the totalitarian state is a comparatively new one. The idea that every human being in a community should be, or could be, regarded as a unit, like a bee in a hive, as having no other significance than that of a part of a big machine, did not exist until quite recently. And so we see that all the while the commercial world has been developing its rule over us, there have gone on many other ancient institutions. There is an old saying, "The necessity of one age is the ornament of the next." And many things which were necessary parts of pre-industrial life are valued as ornaments in our industrialism. I will not go so far as to argue that the King and Parliament, the Church and the churches, have no other position but that of such ornaments, though I think such might very well be argued. But what is more to the point in this lecture is that the thing we call art, which was simply the business of making whatever was required to be made, has now, in our minds, come to mean simply the provision of *ornaments*. We have separated the idea of use from the idea of beauty, and so we have separated the idea of the workman from the idea of the artist. We have put the artist on a specially high pedestal. Industrialism has not destroyed him, on the contrary it has made him a kind of god, a prophet, a seer, a special person not as other men.

And this position, this state of affairs, is the inevitable conseqence of our industrial rule. We have denied to most men the spiritual responsibility of human beings, and therefore we have granted to some special men a special spiritual responsibility. It is as if we said: the factory hand shall have no mind (except when he is not working), but the special man, the man whom we call artist, shall have nothing else but mind. The factory hand shall be concerned only with what is useful; the artist shall be concerned only with what is useless. And the consequence is obvious. More and more the industrial world is driven to concern itself with the purely functional; more and more the artist is driven to concern himself with the purely psychological.

The best industrial architecture is the plain, unadorned, utilitarian construction, such as, for instance, the plain brick viaducts of our railways. The best industrial products of all kinds are characterized by the same stark functionalism. The best furniture, the best utensils, are those from which the designer has most carefully and intelligently weeded out all irrelevances, all unnecessary adornment, all sentimentality. I say these things are the best of industrial products because they are the products which industrialism can most successfully produce. They are those which are most in accord with its own nature. Machines may be good things, but they are not spiritual agencies. You cannot ask machines to be exuberant. You cannot expect them to be concerned with holiness, and holiness is the ultimate criterion in the judgement of human works. Holy! that is to say *whole*, all that a thing should be, and of all human works we must say that the ultimate criterion is holiness, because the ultimate criterion for *man* is holiness. The difference between *holiness* and simple *goodness* is this: the good thing is that which is in accord with the nature of things. The holy thing is that which is also in some way dedicated. So that of holy things we may say that they are not merely good for their immediate purpose, but offered up – a sacrifice of praise.

But this idea, that the criterion for the judgement of all human works is holiness – that every work of man should be a sacrifice of praise – is held to be absurd even by men of religion. "Work is a curse," they say, "and, therefore," they seem to add, "things made under that curse are unworthy of respect." Therefore they see in machines, so they aver, not so much a means to money as a means to the removal of a curse. Thus I read in a recent book on the subject (by Count Serra, a book which has a preface by the present Dean of Canterbury) that "the social rôle" of the machine is "to lighten the labour of all" and thus:

> the more machines the community possesses, the more this labour will be lightened, and work, whilst remaining a necessity and an obligation, will become no more than one of functional activities of the individual. The leisure created by the machine will allow the development of the other faculties of the individual, development which, without the machines, was impossible; for, as Plato says, "there is no greater enemy of the arts and sciences than fatigue and sleep.

Thus our reformers align themselves with pagan philosophers and our modern artists ally themselves with both. Thus, incidentally, they brush aside unnoticed, not only all our mediaeval cathedrals and parish churches, the temples of India and Greece, Egypt and Assyria, but also all the furniture, clothes, pottery, and utensils of pre-industrial times – things which, as they were not made by machinery, must have been produced under the curse and under conditions which did not allow the development of "the arts and sciences". Hence, we must suppose, our Museums of Art to house not things of beauty, things of worshipfulness, good things, but accursed things – or, at the best, curiosities. . . .

I said the artist was driven to concern himself more and more with the purely psyschological and that this was inevitable. The word "psychology" means pertaining to the science of the mind. So to talk about psychological art is, of course, very clumsy. If there were such a word it would be better to say "psychographical". At any rate, my meaning is this: that more and more the artist is compelled to concern himself with the expression of his own personal reactions, and less and less concerned to make things to order, to make things which are useful, to make things which have meaning or use to others, to make things which have any significance but that of exhibiting his personal sensibilities.

Here we are brought up against a very curious phenomenon. Art, which in its own nature is simply the business of making, and is only by accident or in a secondary way an exhibition of the personality of the maker, and is only by accident, and in a secondary way, concerned with the beautiful, pure and simple, has now come to be primarily, and not at all by accident, *personal exhibitionism* and the making of *things of beauty* and nothing else.

When I say personal expression and beauty were accidents, I mean the word "accident" of course in the proper sense, and not in the colloquial way as when we say: I was run over by accident in the street. Grass is green, but grass does not exist in order to be green; greenness is an accident of grass. So, in the same way, any work of man inevitably bears the mark of the man who made it, but it does not exist in order to have that mark; the mark of personality is an accident. Again, every work of man, at least every work that he makes as a human being with care to make it as well as he can, so that when done he looks on it and sees that it is good, every such work has inevitably the quality we call beauty – order, unity, variety, proportion, clarity – but such works are not made in order to exhibit beauty; beauty is an accident of such works.

But now under our industrialism, having divided up the business of making so that all useful things are objects of commerce and are made by machinery – or, being made under conditions of labour which deprive the workman of responsibility for design and therefore make the workman himself into a kind of machine, are as much machine-made as things made by machinery – and so that all delightful things are made by persons who have no other reason for working but to make things which are delightful, we have turned accidents into substances. That is to say, to return to our analogy of grass, it is as though we had contrived to turn out fodder for cattle which had no qualities but that of nutriment, and then, feeling the need for the sensation of greenness, we trained a special kind of workman to produce green for our delight.

There are many who make no complaint about this system of industry. They say, in effect, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. They say that as the result of this system we are in a position to get a great deal more nutriment than before, and we are in a position to get an even brighter and more satisfying green by concentrating our attention purely upon it. Or, leaving the analogy behind us, they say we are able to get a vastly increased number of conveniences, food, clothing, shelter, and transport, and at the same time we are able to get paintings and sculptures, music and poetry, in which an even higher degree of beauty is achieved, more concentrated, more poignant, than ever was obtained in the pre-industrial world.

We may consider this position from several different points of view. We may ask, first of all, simply: is it true? We may ask: is it compatible with Christianity? We may ask: is it compatible with the nature of man? Or we may ask simply: do we like it?

Let us take the first question first. Is it true? Is it true, that is to say, that we really get more conveniences under our industrialism and more and more poignant beauty? I suppose many people will answer without hesitation that modern conveniences are indeed greatly more than were possessed by people of mediaeval times, or even of the eighteenth century. And if we consider such things as railway trains and telephones, the sanitary system of London, our high roads from which all highwaymen have been removed, and all such things, we may certainly think that modern life is more convenient than ancient life. But there is another side to the picture. It is true that the highwaymen have gone, but in other respects the roads are even less safe than they were. It is true that London sanitation is a marvel of engineering, but on the other hand, it is possible to hold the view that London is extraordinarily unpleasant, noisy, and dangerous, a seething whirlpool of competing business men, vulgar beyond words, and in spite of many venerable remains of its past, altogether beastly. It is true that by means of steamships and the exploitation of the vast and virgin lands of America and elsewhere, we have been able to bring food in sufficient quantities to England to feed a population at least four times as big as the population two hundred years ago; but it is very doubtful whether we have really improved England as a place to live in. It is doubtful whether the journey from London to Manchester is as pleasant a journey, that is to say, as full of things pleasing to man, as the same journey in pre-industrial times.

And when it comes to what we now call the works of art, that is to say those special things which exhibit beauty pure and undiluted, these doubts are even more pressing. In spite of all their poignant sensibility, are the works of, for instance, Picasso, Joan Miró, Wyndham Lewis, Henry Moore, Paul Klee, or David Jones, actually more beautiful, that is to say more pleasing when seen, than the paintings and sculptures on mediaeval cathedrals or Indian temples? Are the sculptures on the West Porch at Chartres really inferior to the sculptures of Brancusi? The former are by definition images of kings and queens, accidentally they convey to us the personality of their maker, accidentally they please us. The latter by definition exhibit to us the soul of M. Brancusi, and their sole object is to please. Moreover, it is almost impossible to discover in the sculptures of M. Brancusi even an accidental usefulness – though I suppose you could use one of them to bash a burglar on the head with, or, more seriously, it is possible that such things look nice in your drawing room, and therefore have the accident of being a sort of soothing furniture. At any rate it seems to me at least doubtful whether these works of our hyper-sensibility do, in fact, exhibit more beauty, whether they are, in fact, more lovely than those works which were not primarily made in order to be beautiful.

What about music? But even in the case of music the same considerations hold good. People talk about music as though it were a purely "abstract" art having no reason for existence but that of delightfulness. They say that a tune is a tune, and that is all there is to it. But this is a misunderstanding, as we may see very clearly when we think of the different names we give to different kinds of tunes. For instance, there are marches (military marches, wedding marches), there are dirges, there are hymn tunes, there are dances of all kinds. Thus we see easily that even music is not divorced from utility. Music does not exist merely as sounds; it exists as *appropriate* sounds or *inappropriate* ones. There is the right kind of music for this or that occasion. And if today we think of music as existing simply in the concert hall that proves no more than that we have reduced music to the same position of uselessness as that to which painters and sculptors would reduce painting and sculpture.

So much for our first question. As to the other questions: is modern industrialism compatible with Christianity, with the nature of man, with human likes and dislikes? I think we are on altogether less doubtful ground. It seems to me that there is no doubt whatever that our industrial system is contrary to Christianity, is therefore contrary to the nature of man, which it is the object of Christianity to develop and perfect, and is therefore contrary, or must be in the long run, to human likes and dislikes.

I say industrialism is contrary to Christianity because it is built upon a denial of human responsibility. The factory workman, as such, is a human being, but the factory workman, as such, is not a wholly responsible human being; he is only responsible for doing what he is told, a hand, a sentient part of the machinery. He is only fully responsible when he is no longer a workman. And as regards those workers who remain outside industrialsm, these artists, these poets, it is contrary to the nature of man that he should be engaged in making things which are by definition useless, which are by definition simply psychological exercises. It is contrary to the nature of man because man is a social animal, he cannot, if he would, work simply to please himself, nothing that he does can exist in isolation, it must have its social value and its social usefulness. Moreover, even the poet must eat bread and butter, he must exchange his works for food, clothing, shelter, and to pretend that he is not concerned with such things is the most preposterous untruth, and one which lands him straightway into the position of lapdog and parasite.

If it could be said, or if it could be claimed, that our modern artists in the pursuit of pure beauty were like ancient hermits, the position would be entirely different. The ancient hermit said to himself, in effect, I wish to commune with my God and I wish nothing else; by doing so I shall be of no immediate service to my fellowmen, I will therefore go out from among them so that I shall not be a burden. But this picture of asceticism is a very different one from that of the "art world". You have only to consider the prices of paintings and sculptures by our modern artists to see what a different business it is. Far from not being a burden to their fellows, they depend entirely upon the superabundant riches of wealthy connoisseurs, connoisseurs whose superabundant riches are derived, and under industrialism must be derived, from profits obtained by the underpayment of factory hands. I say, therefore, that there is no comparison between the modern artist and the ancient hermit.

The question we set before ourselves in this lecture is: what is the relation between art and industrialism? We are now in a position to answer. Man is matter and spirit. Industrialism is that system in which man in his material aspect is divorced from man in his spiritual aspect. Industrialism is that system in which the ideas of use and beauty are divorced from one another, and in which all useful things are made in quantity by machinery, and in which useful things, as such, are not considered to be beautiful. But as man is a spiritual being as well as a material one, he demands pleasure as well as physical conveniences. Therefore, under industrialism, use having been divorced from beauty, pleasure must be provided by persons specially trained for the purpose. We therefore have the majority of the population engaged as "hands" in the production of things for use, and a small number of special people engaged in the production of things of beauty. These things are bought by rich connoisseurs whose money comes to them from the profits of industrialism. And the rank and file, not being able to afford the originals, are compelled to satisfy their appetite for beauty by reproductions, phonograph records, and radio concerts.

Such is the relation between art and industrialism, or such would be the relationship were industrialism completely pervasive and operative. Such is the relation to which industrialism tends. It is obvious that we have not yet perfected our industrialism. It is still tainted with the dregs of pre-industrial life and thought. Just as we still have kings with crowns, so we still have houses and furniture and utensils which retain many of the superficial characteristics of things made in past times. And the law of the land is still dogged by an ineradicable connection with the canon law of the church, just as railway trains are still hindered in their development by the fact that the width of railway lines is the same width as of the wheels of the pre-existing stage coach.

Man is matter and spirit, and in man the two are inseparable. Thus when a man dies his spirit is not a man, nor is his dead body. Hence, whether you believe in it or not, the doctrine of "the resurrection of the body". But we are not now concerned with what we believe as to man's mortality or immortality; we are concerned with art and industrialism, man's art and man's work; and we must note that, while it is a matter of common regret that body and spirit should suffer the separation of death, we, in this industrial civilization, do our utmost to bring about that separation during life. We divide use from "art", and we separate the idea of work from the ideas of beauty and pleasure. And thus it comes about that we think it is not only possible but desirable to divide our lives into two departments. We aim at arranging things so that we shall do all necessary bodily labour by mechanical, that is to say *non-spiritual*, means, and, having reduced that labour to the smallest possible amount, we then hope to enjoy spiritual things in our leisure hours.

You will say that this is no new thing, that it is not industrialism which has introduced the dichotomy –

the divorce of work from pleasure. I agree with you. Industrialism has only enabled us to carry that process to a depth of achievement realized under no previous system. The chattel slavery of the ancients, or of the American plantations, was childish in its scope. You may tie a man by the ankle and flay his back with whips and yet leave him a responsible workman, a man responsible for the quality and not merely for the amount of what his labour produces. But we are not so crude in our methods. We do not chain our slaves or thrash them. We simply pay them (as little as possible) to mind machines, and what the machine produces is no longer the workman's concern. Then we provide him with amusements for his leisure time. That is what is meant by "original sin" – loss of *integrity*, so that what God wishes to be united man tries to put asunder. Original sin is the disintegration of human personality.

That is why I agree with you: The attempt to divorce art from work and use from beauty is not new. It has been made from the beginning and resisted from the beginning. You may not believe in "the resurrection of the body", you may not believe in "original sin", but both doctrines are the necessary corollaries of the fact that man is matter and mind, inseparably both. The separation of matter and mind is man's death, and industrialism leads so clearly towards that separation that we may say: *death is the actual aim of industrialism – its diabolical direction.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins—Priest or Poet?

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

THE relationship between the mind of a man of high talent who gives himself to the art of poetry, and the specific religious creed to which he gives assent as a human being, is one that is seldom discussed by critics, and one which, whenever discussed, critics are disposed to confuse rather than to illuminate by argument. It has even been debated by some (*e.g.*, by Signor Papini) whether it is possible for us today to fully appreciate Dante unless we happen to be Roman Catholics. That most Roman Catholics of our day tend to look on the world with eyes that, whatever their merit, are not obviously akin to Dante's, is, apparently, beside the point for those who would enlist such a poet into the ranks of the upholders of their particular church. But this question, whether a poet gains or loses anything, and if so, how much, by his adherence to a prescribed dogmatic form of religious observance, is insistent from the very outset of Gerard Manley Hopkins's career*; and to ignore it would do a disservice to a poet whose influence upon English verse is now at a high point and likely, if anything, to increase rather than diminish in the next few years.

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* THE LETTERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS TO ROBERT BRIDGES *edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Colleer Abbott.* THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS AND RICHARD WATSON DIXON *edited with Notes and an Introduction by Claude Colleer Abbott* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 322 and 192 pp. $10.00 the set).

Gerard Manley Hopkins, as the cautiously accurate life by Father Lahey which was published some five years ago by the Oxford University Press informs us, was born on June 11, 1844 – the eldest child of a family of eight, attached to the moderate wing of the Church of England, and sharing with his brothers and sisters the literary tastes of his father, together with the artistic and musical aptitudes of his mother's family. The year of his birth, incidentally, coincided with the coming into the world of a spirit of very different stamp: Friedrich Nietzsche, and it is interesting to contrast the careers of the Prussian pastor's son and the son of the English consular official. Gerard, as a boy, was equally gifted both in poetry and painting – his most ambitious early effort, "A Vision of the Mermaids", has come down to us in a manuscript illustrated by his own hand – and his early work betrays the equal influence of Keats and of William Morris: Father Lahey, whose literary judgements may safely be disregarded, says Moore and Tennyson. There are lines in a youthful poem, written apparently as early as 1862, which clearly anticipate the later Hopkins:

Soon – as when Summer of his sister Spring
Crushes and tears the rare enjewelling,
And boasting "I have fairer things than these"
Plashes amidst the billowy apple-trees
His lusty hands, in gusts of scented wind
Swirling out bloom until the air is blind
With rosy foam and pelting blossom and mists
Of driving vermeil-rain; and, as he lists,
The dainty onyx-coronals deflowers,

A glorious wanton; — all the wrecks in showers
Crowd down upon a stream, and, jostling thick
With bubbles bugle-eyed, struggle and stick
On tangled shoals that bar the brook — a crowd
Of filmy globes and rosy floating cloud:
So those mermaidens crowded to my rock. . . .

It is not difficult to see in the midst of the lush Keatsian detail of this poem, recalling *Endymion* almost perfectly, in such a line as "bubbles bugle-eyed struggle and stick" more than a promise of the poet who later was destined to revise our entire concepts of the nature of English rhythm. As early as eighteen, then — the time when this poem was written —Hopkins showed promise of rare sensitivity to verbal and plastic beauty. But as Father Lahey remarks, his life was completely changed in its course by his winning a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, in the year following, 1863.

The Oxford which Hopkins entered was as completely different from the Oxford of Shelley's undergraduate days as from the post-War Oxford of our own time. The University which had ardently embraced the High Anglican and Tractarian definitions of dogma in the late thirties was now torn with faction and schism, following upon Newman's famous going over to Catholicism in 1845. The year after Gerard entered was to be marked by a new development of the controversy between Church of England advocates and Catholics: Newman's famous defence against Kingsley, later rewritten as his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, comes from that year. The rival claims of Catholics and Church of England men to call themselves Apostolic Christians were probably never more intensely debated than during Gerard's undergraduate days. And the result was what might be expected in the case of a person of so sensitive and so scrupulous a nature as his: in 1866, the young undergraduate took the step of severing his connection with the Church of England and of going over into Catholicism.

The result, as Father Lahey's Life abundantly proves, was a storm of disapproval on the part of Gerard's parents, and an equal uproar on the part of tutors and other academic authorities. Newman, whose subtle and well-trained hand may be clearly seen in this transformation, alone seems to have befriended the boy, and he encouraged him to go on and finish his academic career despite opposition from all quarters. That Newman in this showed a rare perception of a talent destined to an even more remarkable flowering than his own, is not to be doubted. The possession of such a friend may have quite possibly steadied Hopkins in his first sharp contact with what was destined to be his future course in life. But that Robert Bridges, a fellow-undergraduate of the same age, but of less malleable disposition – one has but to look at the portraits of the two men printed in this book, to realize that fact – either shared in the knowledge, or cared one way or another, about his friend's conversion may be doubted. That Hopkins did not reveal its possibility to him until accomplished is indisputable fact.

A year after finishing Oxford, in May, 1868, Hopkins took the further step of entering the Jesuit order as a novice. There is a hint in a letter to him from Newman at this time that the possibility of his becoming a Benedictine had been previously discussed.

There is no reason to feel any particular surprise at his choice of a religious rather than a secular career. The very fervency of his conversion – motivated as it may have been by some personal crisis as well as by a crisis of thought at the time, as Father Lahey almost hints – having been matched by the opposition of his parents and teachers at Oxford, Hopkins may very well have felt that the only way he could show his complete loyalty to the Church of his adoption was by entering the ranks of its priesthood. But the choice of the Jesuits was made at the cost of a severe and heavy sacrifice; the sacrifice of his own poetic talent. From 1868 to the time of the wreck of the steamer Deutschland in 1875, Hopkins wrote no poetry. The pressure on him intensified to such a degree and extent that when he wrote poetry again, it was as an entirely other, and novel, poet. For as Bridges says in his introduction to the collected poems, "The Wreck of the Deutschland", which then leads off the list of Hopkins's major poems, is "like a great dragon lying folded in the gate, to forbid all entrance".

The obscurity of these early years as Catholic priest is but little lightened by the letters he exchanged with Bridges which are contained in the first of the two volumes of correspondence now under discussion. Though there is every reason to suspect that Bridges was far from being sympathetic, Hopkins continued to write him from time to time. That Bridges was downright unsympathetic, not to say rude, may almost be inferred from his own destruction of his part of the correspondence, as well as from the fact that there is a gap of over two years (August, 1871-January, 1874) between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh letters. Hopkins must surely have felt some fundamental lack of sympathy in his correspondent as the correspondence went on; but he persisted, nevertheless, and this in itself makes perhaps the strangest accident in the history of all literary accidents: the fact that the poems of one of the most remarkable of all English poets should have been preserved through the offices of a man who shared none of the poet's ideas, and was perpetually hostile to him. It was perhaps only the memory of some old kindness on Bridges's part experienced during the time his conversion hung in the balance, that made Hopkins go on at all with his letter-writing.

Meantime, the terrible isolation of these years is emphasized rather than diminished by such outbreaks of feeling as that which marks Letter 27, in which the young Jesuit, disgusted at the fact that the poor, under modern industrial capitalism, are forced to support a system that they neither profit by nor understand, avows himself a Communist, and by such passages as that which Father Lahey prints from Hopkins's private Diary, to which he alone, so far, has had access:

> Our schools at Roehampton ended with two days of examination before St. Ignatius' feast. I was very tired, seemed deeply cast down, till I had some kind words from the Provincial. The tax on my strength has been greater than I have felt before; at least now — I felt myself weak and can do but little.

Finally, these years are marked by the emergence of Hopkins's first major poems.

That these mark no trial flight, but rather emerge from close study of the unrhymed choruses in Milton's *Samson Agonistes* in which the regular metrical pattern of English verse is handled with the utmost of free resolution and suspension, the later letters to Bridges bear abundant testimony. What is not so clear is where Hopkins obtained that strong stress-accent of his, marked by equally strong alliteration, which holds together, in a rugged rhythmic beat, the most daring deviations he practises from ordinary metre. It could not have come to him from *Piers Plowman* which he did not read till 1882, and which he then disliked ("I am reading that famous poem, and am coming to the conclusion that it is not worth reading"). It surely must have occurred to him later that it was a rebirth of effects well known to the Anglo-Saxon poets, but there is no evidence to show that Hopkins studied Anglo-Saxon while at Oxford. It seems to have rested, so far as the evidence in these letters shows, in a conviction that English poetry scans better "from slack to stress and not from stress to slack", and that therefore the iamb or the anapaest is its basis; and from a desire to mark the stress as clearly as possible at the very outset of every line by a free, detached, stressed syllable. Whatever its origin, Hopkins christened his metrical discovery with the title which alone clearly describes it: "sprung rhythm". A full analysis of its origin and quality may be found in Father Lahey's volume.

The effect of the poems written by Hopkins under the influence of his peculiar metrical theory was to intensify largely the dithyrambic, as opposed to what may be called the discursive element of English poetry. Keats and, following on him, Tennyson, to mention only the poets most popular in Hopkins's own day, had perfected a style of liquid sensuousness in utterance, a style that flowed smoothly and discursively and that depended on sharp perception of natural detail allied to great care in the choice of vowel-harmonics: Tennyson's once famous "black as ash-buds in March" is an example that immediately comes to the mind. Browning added little except a tendency to turn from academic versification into conversational doggerel; his work is important more for its conquest of new poetic territory, than for any important innovations in metrical treatment. But Swinburne had, possibly inspired by Shelley, the happy audacity of turning his poems into more dithyrambic utterances, helped thereto by a facile ability to write anapaests and a fair ear for consonantal alliteration. The result was that in his early work the reader is so hurried along by the headlong speed of the syllables that he never stops to ask whether Swinburne means anything precisely or not—and as Swinburne himself merely continued to startle and surprise by repeating his alliterative effects with even greater indifference to meaning, the effect of his technical innovations stopped there, and got no further.

Hopkins had not only read Swinburne, as practically every person interested in poetry in that day was obliged to do, and had thought something about it; but he had also read and had been impressed by a long review by Saintsbury of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* which appeared in the *Academy* in October, 1874. He had been taken then and there with Whitman's "savage style", which he nevertheless believed was meant to be rhythmic prose by its author, while his own "discovery", sprung rhythm, was not. Or as he wrote to Bridges:

> Why do I employ sprung rhythm at all? Because it is the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one would have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm – that is, rhythm's self – and naturalness of expression.

All this, the influence of Swinburne, the rediscovery of early Saxon practice through the development of sprung rhythm, the shock of amazed recognition on being confronted with a kindred spirit in reading Saintsbury's review of Whitman – all this was doubtless working in Hopkins's own mind, when in December 1875 at the news of the wreck of the steamer Deutschland, he broke the seven-years' silence he had imposed on himself and again became a poet.

II

The poetry of Hopkins rests on three main lines of mental activity, and unless the reader is prepared to follow these or sympathize with them, it is probable that he would do better to leave this poetry alone. Hopkins is chiefly distinguished from his contemporaries, the poets of mid-Victorianism, by (1) his feeling of the awfulness and incomprehensibility of God; (2) his belief that nature both in her rich and joyous and sad and stern moods is the book in which man can best read the message of that awfulness and incomprehensibility; and (3) his sense of the fundamental equality of men, which led him on one occasion to say that he "knew in my heart Walt Whitman's mind to be more like my own than any man's living". Thus he presents us with the picture of a more religious and less revolutionary Wordsworth, more sharply aware than Wordsworth was of the distinction between natural truth and man's own private interpretation of it, seeking for some intellectual stay in the world of fleeting appearances, and sharpening his own sensibility both of the glory and injustice of life to a weapon that gives all his poetry a special poignancy of intensity: or as Richard Watson Dixon called it, a "terrible pathos – something of what you call temper in poetry: a right temper which goes to the point of the terrible: the terrible crystal".

In all this, the only poet contemporaneous with him whom Hopkins at all resembles is Coventry Patmore. Such comparisons as Dixon makes in the same letter from which I have just quoted, with the seventeenth-century poets, are really beside the point. Each age has its own poetical problems, and its own daring in overcoming them; and it is unlikely that Hopkins, influenced as he had been, profoundly, equally by the Saxons, the early Elizabethans, and Wordsworth, could equal the seventeenth-century men in their own field as it is unlikely that we shall. Patmore had a perception of nature that was fresh and vigorous, but more sentimental and less sharp than that of Hopkins. He had less of the painter's or of the naturalist's eye. He had also a sense of the ordering of God going on in daily life that was closely akin to Hopkins's own feeling of God's overpoweringness. He unfortunately stopped just short of being a great poet by his insistence that sentimental domesticity was, after all, the greatest theme possible to poetry, and by a perfectly irrational and dreadfully reactionary Toryism which, as he went on, displayed itself more and more as pure snobbery. His knowledge of the structure of English verse and his ability to invent new metrical forms and combinations was as much below that of Hopkins as Hopkins's was above that of any poet of his time. The two men only met in Patmore's old age, when his mind was too hardened to grasp the implications of his young contemporary's work. Moreover, Patmore, even if he could have understood Hopkins, would doubtless have been appalled by his frank democracy of feeling, such feeling as gives "Felix Randal" and "Harry Ploughman" their earth-born nobility of treatment and of phrase.

But behind and above all this, there is a quality in Hopkins's verse that defies all verbal comparison, description, or translation, being hidden in the shift of sounds from syllable to syllable, and perceptible in practically every poem he wrote. I choose only this:

I admire thee, master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;
The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;
Stanching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind;
Ground of being, and granite of it: past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds, bodes but abides. . . .

The tremendous weight and gravity of these syllables—like a great heart beating under tremendous pressure, and still struggling forward and onward—is something that Shelley and Swinburne were but the pale echo of, and that even Milton himself never surpassed. The experiments of Bridges himself (in "London Snow," for example, a poem which probably owes much to pondering on Hopkins) seem more artificial, more *willed*, than anything here in this intensity of utterance beating up under a weight of vast foreboding. And this method of putting everything under "instress", as Hopkins himself calls it, has its great triumphs in such an amazing dance of vowel and consonantal onomatopoeia as "The Windhover," and then dies away in the incredible desolation and anguish of:

> *O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall*
> *Frightful, sheer no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap*
> *May who ne'er hung there. Nor dies long our small*
> *Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,*
> *Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all*
> *Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.*

The discipline of the Jesuits — whether Hopkins enjoyed it or not is here beside the point — served unquestionably to intensify these sensibilities, romantic as they originally were, towards a point where the natural sensuousness of his mind — for Hopkins was not primarily an intellectual poet, and his late adverse criticism of Keats, frequently cited, is but a criticism of his earlier self — took on a dignity and weight that brings it abreast of such a classical writer as Aeschylus himself. None can deny the fierce moral struggle incessantly waged, and implicit in these poems and letters. That the moral struggle was primarily concerned with one man's devotion to a God of whom he had no proof beyond the illumination of interior conviction, as Father Lahey frankly admits; and that it concerned itself more and more with the problem of whether that man, the poet-priest Hopkins, was in himself worthy of any salvation, or could still struggle and take steps after it, diminishes nothing from our interest in the quest. Nor the fact that, finally, it ended in exile, obscurity, and mental desolation. After all, such a tragic failure is worth a thousand facile successes of the Longfellow or even the Tennyson type; for in it the opposites of Romantic yearning after the infinite, and of classical order, fought and met, to produce a result as great in its influence upon the English poetry being written today as anything else in the history of all English poetry.

III

The question however still arises whether the strict orthodoxy of the Jesuit discipline may not have somewhat limited Hopkins's mind, and whether some other doctrine, capable of a broader and more personal interpretation, could not better serve the turn of those who wish today to be marked as his followers.

Hopkins himself frankly discussed this question in his letters to Dixon, whose beautiful and generous nature—in strong contrast to the obstinate crabbed opposition of Bridges—showed itself in repeated requests to continue writing, to refrain from destroying work, to make his talent more accessible to the public. Hopkins says:

> Our Society values, as you say, and has contributed to literature, to culture; but only as a means to an end. Its history and its experience show that literature proper, as poetry, has seldom been found to be to that end a very serviceable means. We have had for three centuries often the flower of the youth of a country in numbers enter our body: among these, how many poets, how many

artists of all sorts there must have been! But there have been very few Jesuit poets, and where there have been, I believe it would be found on examination that there was something exceptional in their circumstances, or, so to say, counterbalancing in their career. For genius attracts fame, and individual fame St. Ignatius looked on as the most dangerous and dazzling of all attractions. – The same sort of thing may be noticed in our saints. St. Ignatius himself was certainly, every one who reads his life will allow, one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived; but after the establishment of the Order he lived in Rome so ordinary, so hidden a life, that when after his death they began to move in the process of his canonization, one of the Cardinals who had known him in his later life and in that way only, said that he had never remarked anything in him more than in any edifying priest. – The Blessed John Berchmans was beatified for his most exact observance of the rule; he said of himself, and the text is famous among us, "Common life is the greatest of my mortifications" – I quote these cases to prove that show and brilliancy do not suit us, that we cultivate the commonplace outwardly and wish the beauty of the King's daughter, the soul, to be from within.

There is much that might be written on this theme, but perhaps it is sufficient to point out that the concealment or the negation of talent is expressly condemned, not by St. Ignatius, but by the Gospel. However, Hopkins did not think so, or at least the discipline of his order did not permit him so to think, and so there is record of profound fits of weariness and depression in the letters, spells of diarrhoea and vomitings, referred to frequently, and probably arising out of nervousness and worry, together with repeated repressions of the poetic impulse that came, as all such impulses must come, unasked and unsought. And there is that awful sense of being deprived of God's mercy at the last, to which the great "Carrion Comfort" sonnet bears such impressive testimony; and the final cry that he is merely "time's eunuch", fit for no good work. Moreover there is the testimony of Father Lahey himself who admits that Hopkins was largely a failure as a Jesuit, and was found by his superiors to be "impractical".

Perhaps only a Protestant like the present writer is entitled to retort that if the Jesuits can not think of Hopkins as an ornament to their Order, it is for the world to claim him as an ornament to its order—for surely no artist directed his own experience with more loving care than this man. But he failed to take into account Blake's profound warning: "Expect poison from the standing water." And just for that reason, the poem that he probably himself obscurely hoped might crown his creative effort: a poetic drama on the subject of the martyrdom of a Welsh saint, St. Winefred, remained, except for two lovely fragments, unwritten. The conformity to a daily discipline of mind, combined with the practical indifference to worldly success, worked in the end to stifle a poetic equipment as great as that possessed by any English poet.

To an artist of Hopkins's sort, dogmatic orthodoxy, though it may be of assistance in first orientating and disciplining the mind, always ends by finally destroying it. Art, and perhaps more particularly poetry, is a heresy which ends in being more valuable to man than any orthodoxy whatsoever, in so far as it makes no abstract and dogmatic definitions, but confines itself to the human scale, to that flexible and yet ever-adaptable sense of values that underlies all human experience. If we deplore in a Blake or a Shelley the lack of classical, ordered form that made them incapable of producing major works of completely sustained structure or interest, we must equally regret the narrowing down of theme and treatment that made such a poet as Hopkins incapable, after his first beginnings, of creating major works at all: for his later sonnets are like compressed dramas, demanding but not achieving the freer spaces of a larger and more comprehensive canvas. It is this limitation, this inability to bridge over the gulf between the theological and the human that makes of him still a poet for specialists in poetry. His fundamental democracy would have been appalled by this fate, and he might, if recalled from the dead, frankly prefer those poets of the present day who have rejected his Catholicism but borrowed turns of phrase and sound out of his rich repertory to illuminate their own conception of a lyrical Communism, to all those critics whose academic orthodoxy is now disturbed by his growing acceptance among men of letters as one of the great English Classics for all time.

REVIEWS

A New Faith For The New State*

For some years Christopher Dawson has been engaged upon a line of thought which possesses the highest significance for any reader aware of the fact that Western civilization is faced with a major crisis – a line of thought which leads to a new appreciation of the relation between religion and culture. Because Mr. Dawson's work has been largely in specialized and little-known provinces of history and sociology, it has not received the attention it deserves. This present volume sums up his work and applies the conclusions drawn from it to the immediate issues of Marxism and Fascism. Since Mr. Dawson is concerned with the position of religion in the new relationship between society and the individual, he does not write as a partisan of either collectivism or totalitarianism. His detachment from the struggle permits him to give a most concise and lucid analysis of the rival political forces which are thrusting their political systems upon our modern mass-democracies.

Mr. Dawson does not oppose the tendency towards mass-organization in itself. He grants as possible M. Lucien Romier's argument that the industrialization of economics demands a corresponding organization of the political and the social. But as a Catholic he is seriously concerned with the religious elements in these movements:

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* RELIGION AND THE MODERN STATE *by Christopher Dawson* (SHEED & WARD. 154 pp. $2.00).

> For the new State is in search of a new faith. It is not content with the colourless neutrality which characterized nineteenth-century liberalism; it demands some positive principle on which to base its action, some ideal which will arouse the enthusiasm of its supporters and secure the spiritual loyalty of its citizens.

The central problem in this book is the place of Christianity in the new state, in the mass civilization of the future towards which all the West has been rushing headlong since the World War upset the political, economic, and social apple-cart.

Western civilization has reached a crisis and much depends on how it is met. One school of thought favours immediate practical remedies, various kinds of tinkering with the social machine. A great many others believe that the machine cannot be patched up, that it must be drastically and radically treated if it is to survive, that the old social mechanism must give place to the new. Mr. Dawson is most concerned with an alternative interpretation, that the spirit of our civilization is wrong and must be changed before any good will come of improved social or economic machinery. Religion has been gradually crowded out of our "Christian" life by the importance, according to our present standards, of money-making. The opposition of Christianity and the world still exists: St. Augustine's picture of the Two Cities still applies. But where many observers feel that the City of God is already doomed, Dawson believes that Europe has been Christian too long not to have been strongly affected by

Christian ideas. Even the anti-Christian forces of today represent partial survivals of the Christian tradition: Nationalism with its mystical concept of the nation as a spiritual unity, for which individuals will sacrifice themselves; Liberalism and Democracy with their humanitarian idealism and faith in progress; Socialism with its passion for social justice and the rights of the poor and disinherited. The secularization of Western culture has distorted these survivals from their original meanings. Humanitarian idealism has developed into the belief that man's end is secular civilization; the passion for social justice has supplied the basis for the social atheism of the Communists which denies human rights and spiritual freedom. The vague Liberalism of the nineteenth century hid these facts from our eyes. The rise of Collectivism and Totalitarianism brings out the issue clearly.

The World War, the depressions which followed the conflict, and forces which had been at work for years unknown to the smugly secure Victorians—all these combined to bring about the breakdown of capitalism. As the old order began to give way, the welter of secular creeds merged into two opposed movements: Fascism and Communism, which are both forms of dictatorship, one by the individual and one by the party. Communism appeals to many people as the only alternative to the selfishness and materialism of capitalist society. Instincts of violence were awakened by the War; social revolution no longer seemed so repugnant. And the collapse of the intricate mechanism of world trade, together with the economic chaos which followed, recommended a scientifically planned economy to a great many people. But in spite of the tremendous alteration of the general atmosphere of Europe, Communism succeeded only in Russia: it conquered an antiquated and inefficient autocracy and not a modern industrialized bourgeois democracy. Mr. Dawson suggests an answer to this problem: the doctrine of class warfare, which is a central part of Marxian theory, does not apply to modern conditions; liquidation of the bourgeoisie is a bit difficult in a country like England which has three classes: upper middle, middle middle, and lower middle classes. The middle class has become so wide and elastic that strict application of the principle of class warfare would totally destroy society in the more advanced Western nations.

Fascist theory applied more nearly to existing conditions and consequently dictatorships of this type rose where thrones collapsed. Pre-War Socialism paved the way for Fascism by destroying the liberal ideals upon which parliamentary democracy was based. Democracy became a mask for selfish economic and financial influences. Men came to "look on Capitalism as synonymous with all that is evil and on the State as the instrument of Capitalism". So when the middle classes were faced with a fight for existence, they found new social and political ideals which bore no resemblance to parliamentary democracy or social democracy. Dawson defines Fascism as the Syndicalism of Georges Sorel, purged of its Marxian elements and reorganized on a national corporative basis. "It has the same belief in violence as a political tonic and purgative, and his [Sorel's] ideals of heroism and honour and his appreciation of the moral value of conflict." It rejects the idea of class war and accepts solidarity and social unity; to obtain them it appeals to the potent force of patriotic nationalism. Fascism is as opposed to the laissez-faire system as Communism:

> It subordinates private profits to national interests and teaches employers and employed to treat one another as partners instead of as rivals. Yet it does not destroy individual responsibility and initiative and it gives each industry a considerable measure of self-government. The consequence is that the Corporative State meets most of the criticisms which are directed at the capitalist system without involving the revolutionary consequences of a purely socialist system.

Mr. Dawson finds the Turkish type of dictatorship perhaps more significant than Italian Fascism, German National-Socialism, or Russian Communism. As in Russia, it is anti-religious, and has secularized national culture, adopting Western methods and scorning Western political and economic control. As in Germany, it encourages fanatical nationalism, racial superiority and purity, and militarism, and protests against the post-War settlement of the map of Europe:

> Moreover the Turkish dictator, Kamal Ataturk [Mustafa Kemal Pasha] corresponds far more closely than Mussolini with the Nazi ideal of dictatorship. Kamal has actually done what Hitler would like to do. He has been, in the literal sense of the word, the saviour of his country, the man who almost miraculously turned disgraceful defeat into peace with honour, and he did it not by means of diplomacy and appeals to the League of Nations but by a dramatic victory over what seemed overwhelming odds.
>
> Kamalism is a purely national movement, not a class or an economic movement. Dictatorships rise out of

defeat or frustration; in Turkey national prestige was restored by a direct victory, not by a new economic or social system. The Turkish system lies about halfway between Fascism and Communism. Appropriately enough it shows signs of spreading in the Balkans and Southern Russia. A purely nationalist movement, it is clearly an outgrowth of the Treaty of Versailles.

Democracy, as it is known in the West, has been on the defensive since the world was made safe for it. The return to pre-War "normalcy" was checked by the changed economic and political equilibrium; parliamentary democracy had developed hand in hand with capitalism; they were parallel expressions of liberal ideas. In England the system depended upon a sensible governing class and a two-party system. The replacement of the first by professional politicians with no sense of social responsibility came at the same time as the splitting of the parties into groups so far divergent in principle and aim that concerted action became impossible. No agreement to differ is now possible; the issues are too sharply opposed and no common view of society exists. Dawson finds that if constitutional government is to be retained, and socialism with its doctrine of class warfare and nationalism with its appeal to violence avoided, the prestige of citizenship must be restored so that it is equivalent to the Fascist's or Communist's pride in his party membership. The great weakness of democratic government is the absence of the personal element, which tends to be overwhelmed by party machinery and bureaucracy. If a strong personal leadership is not available to unite the nation, there must be a powerful social philosophy. Dawson, like other foreign observers, finds the Roosevelt Administration of the greatest interest as a new development: a constitutional dictatorship. The New Deal is a tenuous social philosophy; its weaknesses are now becoming evident. Today Russia alone has a powerful official state-philosophy; in the past, all Europe based its social and political life on religious sanctions. Today the non-Socialist parties have no philosophy: they appeal only to vague sentiments. Dawson blames revolutionary movements and the craving for political or economic panaceas on the absence of objective moral standards in the secularized state of today. The Fascist or Communist State is at once the culmination of the process of secularization and a spiritual reaction against nineteenth-century bourgeois materialism: an attempt to find some substitute for the lost religious foundations of European civilization.

The Totalitarian State is largely the product of three factors: universal compulsory education, universal military service (except in the British Empire and the United States), and the vast extension of state economic control due to Socialism, industrialism, and the humanitarian reform movement. The gradual increase of the state's scope of activity preceded Communism and Fascism, which added the new principle of dictatorship. The spirit of this principle is the same that infused the religious and military orders with the *esprit de corps* essential for collective action. It is aristocratic in that a privileged *élite* have supreme control and democratic in that there is a wide base of selection. It tends to generate intolerance and fanaticism, but it avoids the democratic weakness of a soulless bureaucracy.

So much for Dawson's analysis of political trends.

He holds no brief for any of the systems he discusses, and makes clear his belief that spiritual freedom is not dependent upon parliamentary democracy and economic liberalism, the pre-War "normalcy". But he points out that German National-Socialism has a racial and political mysticism which involves a serious danger of conflict with traditional religion; that Communism has a dogmatic creed which is definitely anti-religious because it is a religion itself. Italian Fascism alone has adopted an objective and realistic attitude toward religion. Dawson foresees the formation of Totalitarian States in England and America that will have the same relation to Anglo-Saxon political and social traditions as Naziism has to those of Prussia and Central Europe. This omnipotent state would crush out religion by its organization of society on a secular basis and by the force of public opinion inspired by the state through control of education, radio, press, and cinema. Religion's existence would then be at stake, unless we accept Professor Julian Huxley's terminology and say that the God-religious will yield to the social-religious. Dawson states his own position thus:

> I do not myself believe that man will ever find a true religious satisfaction in the worship of himself, or even of some magnified and idealized reflection of himself in the race or in humanity at large.

Since Communism is more than a political belief, since it is an economy, a philosophy, and a creed offering a rival way of salvation to mankind, Dawson finds that "it is in Communism that the latent opposition between the new state and the Christian religion attains its full realization in the social consciousness of our age". To him it is a real Kingdom of Antichrist, a "counter-church". As such, its conflict with Christianity is the vital issue of our time.

In treating this conflict, Dawson shows how Marx's thought was influenced unconsciously by the Jewish and Christian traditions: how Marxism, "a godless religion and a materialist spirituality", sprang from the revolutionary tradition which drew its vital force from religious sources. In one of the most brilliant chapters of this book, Dawson compares the Marxian and Christian philosophies of history, since both are historical faiths and the conflict between them is sharpest at this point of closest contact. He gives a lucid exposition of the Catholic view with its combination of universalism with a sense of the uniqueness and irreversibility of the historic process; its prophetic and apocalyptic sense of mystery and Divine Judgement behind the rational sequence of cause and effect; with Augustine's image of the Two Cities dominating the whole picture. Dawson traces the survival of Christian elements in the materialist interpretation of history through its adoption of certain sectarian and anti-Catholic forms of the apocalyptic tradition. He points out its curious transfiguration of the Jewish historical attitude and of the materialism of Feuerbach. He finds the Marxian social dialectic inconsistent in its abandonment of the idea of class conflict, once the proletarian revolution is achieved. History simply stops and no force of change is left in terms of Marx's own theory. Dawson finds in this the victory of the Marxian apocalyptic over the Marxian philosophy.

The Christian theory of man and society involves two great principles: the idea of a supernatural order and the idea of the dependence of human society and law upon the divine society and law of this supernatural order. Both principles are given equal weight in the social encyclicals of Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius XI, which develop a consistent exposition of Christian social theory that avoids the excesses caused by the emphasis of one at the expense of the other. Dawson asserts that there has never been a perfect Christian State, although there have been a number of more or less Christian states. He considers Protestantism, Liberalism, and Communism as the three successive stages by which our civilization has travelled from Catholicism to complete secularization:

> The first eliminated the Church, the second eliminated Christianity, and the third eliminates the human soul. We cannot hope for a Christian society or a Christian economic life until our civilization has recovered its moral conscience, its faith in God, and its membership of the Church.

He sees Communism as the end of an age and calls for a true world revolution: a return, or rather a new attempt to attain, to the spiritual order:

> A turning of the human mind from the circumference to the center, from the emptiness of modern civilization and progress to the vision of the spiritual reality which stands all the time looking down on our ephemeral activities like the snow mountains above the jazz and gigolos of a jerry-built hotel.

Dawson has written a masterly study of the various forms of social idealism which force themselves upon our attention today. Christians will find his book of absorbing interest; a great body of others of widely divergent points of view will find here a clearer picture of Catholic views and much criticism of their own beliefs that will be hard to answer; both, perhaps, will gain a better understanding of the nature of our difficulties because of this lucid, fair, and convincing analysis of the modern crisis.

MASON WADE

The Technical Approach*

"ESSAYS in Craft and Elucidation" R. P. Blackmur aptly subtitles this collection of pieces on authors all of whom are contemporary except for Samuel Butler and Henry James. "Criticism", he says in his final essay, "The Critic's Job of Work", "names and arranges what it knows and loves, and searches endlessly with every fresh impulse or impression for better names and more orderly arrangements". All that is implied in that subtitle and that statement Mr. Blackmur does superlatively well; scanning writers, in the main, who have paid loving attention to technical matters, he probes their techniques with a consistent and discerning eye; examining writers who have been justly called obscure, he does much to illuminate their obscurity. And there can be no doubt that Mr. Blackmur "loves and knows" the literature of which he writes: he has read it earnestly and thoroughly and brought to its appreciation a careful and distinction-making prose. Yet most readers, I think, will leave him feeling not quite satisfied, they will feel some vital issue has been avoided, some function of criticism has not been performed.

* THE DOUBLE AGENT *by R. P. Blackmur* (ARROW EDITIONS. 302 pp. $3.00).

The easiest explanation of this would be to say that Mr. Blackmur is remote from life – these essays are issued by a small publisher, most of them have appeared in obscure magazines, and they do not deal with popular authors. The explanation is not less true for being easy, but it needs some qualification. Mr. Blackmur is rightly insistent that literature is not life, but he does not plainly fall into the error of claiming for it an inviolate existence *in vacuo*; its "human or moral value" is of considerable interest to him. Wherein he is remote from life is in the judgements he makes on life. These judgements are a necessary basis of his literary criticism, and while he never states them explicitly (which is not to be asked of a collection of essays written at odd times), the vague outlines of them are apparent.

Four of the twelve essays in this book allow a good approach to the discovery of Mr. Blackmur's basic judgements; they are "Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language", "Masks of Ezra Pound", "Examples of Wallace Stevens", and "The Method of Marianne Moore". Mr. Cummings's poetry Mr. Blackmur finds a complete failure, Mr. Pound's a partial one, and the poetry of Mr. Stevens and Miss Moore he finds, within sharply defined limits, to be entirely successful. The burden of his complaint against the first two is that they are unintelligible (Mr. Cummings far more than Mr. Pound), and this he establishes in something over sixty pages. Convinced by Mr. Eliot's dictum that a poem does not communicate emotion but is informed with an understandable emotion of its own, Mr. Blackmur perforce takes a tortuous path to the conclusion that the work of these two poets has for its emotions those of private experience. In taking it, he displays an intellectual subtlety worthy of I. A. Richards and a sensitivity to the strictly verbal qualities of verse; but when he has gone his course, one is aware that his final criticism of his subjects is that they have misused or failed to understand the structural paraphernalia of their craft: and that is an insufficient criticism. His praise of Mr. Stevens and Miss Moore is for the reverse reason.

However much one may believe that life is best interpreted in dualistic terms, one may still see an ultimate monism in all its departments, and hold that the accidents of a thing can be what they are only in virtue of its substance. So it is that one might work from a consideration of the worth of how a poet expresses himself to a consideration of the worth of what he expresses; the style, after all, is developed for a certain purpose, and, even in its finest technicalities, will be informed by that purpose. Such a unity, it is almost needless to say, will not necessarily destroy a gradation in one's values; that things interlock does not mean that they all exist in a state of equality. Mr. Blackmur, of course, has his values hierarchically arranged, but the trouble is that the crown of them seems no true ultimate. Eventually he accepts or rejects on the ground of technical excellence.

It might be, and has been, argued that a critic can do no more. Mr. Blackmur himself says that "criticism must be concerned, first and last . . . with the poem as it is read and as what it represents is felt" – a good injunction to those critics who ride their hobbies with no eye to the text – and he condemns the Marxist Granville Hicks as one in whom bias "replaces as well as instigates the terms of judgement", as an example of the "man who is guilty of the worst human heresy, the man who is the victim of one idea". This is said in spite of the fact that Mr. Blackmur admits to Marxian sympathies. But poetry draws its richness from life and in turn increases life's richness, and unless some ordered system of ideas underlies both its production and appreciation, it is not so good poetry as it might be nor seen for what it is. Mr. Blackmur would probably grant as much; what distinguishes him, though not in any splendid isolation, is his belief that one system of ideas will serve nearly as well as another. This of course soon passes into the difficult problem of whether or not enjoyment of literature depends on acceptance of an author's metaphysical or religious views. Nevertheless, it is manifest that the enjoyment of literature is severely limited when approval is given only to dexterity of an author's means.

Mr. Blackmur is probably second to none in his admiration of the work of T. S. Eliot, and he has the sense and unusual tolerance to admit that Mr. Eliot's poetry depends for its strength on a Christian view of life:

> However complexly arrived at, and with whatever, as the outsider must think them, tactful evasions in application, his convictions are directly and nobly held. If they enhance narrowness and put some human problems on too simple a plane they yet unflaggingly enforce depth. The mind reaches down until it touches bottom.

Two paragraphs later Mr. Blackmur says:

> Conviction in the end is opinion and personality, which however greatly valuable cannot satisfy those who

> wrongly expect more. . . . If we regard [Mr. Eliot's] prose arguments as we do his poetry — as a personal edifice — [we] will be content with what he is.

Christianity, in other words, is to be valued because it enables certain poets to produce good poetry; poetry is the final arbiter of Christianity's worth in "revealing the actual". One need not be a Christian to see something inherently vicious in this; it is offensive to common sense in that it makes a total view of the universe subordinate to a special sensibility's way of looking on select phenomena (which is what poetry is). The logical reduction of such a statement is that personal taste is the best judge of validity, that solipsism is the one ultimate truth.

It is in that, then, that Mr. Blackmur is remote from life; he does not divorce poetry from life, he does not voice any Cabellian nonsense, but one must seriously question whether the terms in which he sees life are those given by either tradition or experience. The fact may be that Mr. Blackmur is so deeply immersed in the life of his time that he is not able to see life in its more truthful and lasting aspects. "Life" Mr. Blackmur, who calls on criticism for a "reduction to literary fact", might find a term inexcusably vague; yet life is sufficiently constant in its nature to stand as something to whose principles literary criticism must conform if it is to carry any weight. There is this further, that the measured utterances of any man are consistent with his beliefs, whether or not there is a conscious logic connecting them, and Mr. Blackmur's sympathy for the Marxian politics of Malcolm Cowley cannot be totally divorced from his aesthetic approach to literature. Thus to ferret out Mr. Blackmur's politics is not to judge him by some extraneous issue: in our day politics are no longer merely a matter of opinions as to the tactics best suited for attaining a common end; they are a matter of fundamental importance, involving their adherent's view of the whole universe, and such a view is the bedrock of literature, as the history of literature itself testifies.

GEOFFREY STONE

The Age of Metaphysics*

IT IS one of the great pities of present-day American education – and for that matter of present-day American culture – that the modern college student is left so ignorant of the great nineteenth-century line of native American thinkers who, whatever their limitations, combined character and intellect, and courageously attacked the deepest problems of man and the universe, in a way which makes most of their twentieth-century successors seem like mere surface parasites upon a culture that greater men have built. Pumpelly, Brownson, Ticknor, Cogswell, Motley, others even as late as William James are names that mean next to nothing to the modern undergraduate. Yet in their own time they exercised an influence – in science, in education, in the whole social and intellectual life of a developing republic – which scarcely one modern American intellectual can claim; and, without in the least seeking to imitate Europeans, they earned an intellectual prestige for Americans abroad that has no counterpart today. It would not be strange, therefore, if in the life of one of their kind is to be found something of the secret that American education seems only too clearly to have lost.

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* MARK HOPKINS *by J. H. Denison* (SCRIBNER'S. 327 pp. $3.00).

Of this distinguished lineage was Mark Hopkins, and from that fact derives the peculiar interest of Mr. J. H. Denison's new biography of that illuminating nineteenth-century figure. Mr. Denison's is not the first biography of Mark Hopkins, nor perhaps the best that will be written. It says almost nothing of Hopkins's views of contemporary social and political problems, though his life spanned the period from 1802 to 1887, during which the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath changed the course of European history, the American Civil War brought about the conquest of one whole civilization by its Northern antithesis, and the problems of industrial capitalism became insistent and acute. It tells little, at the other extreme, of Hopkins's views as to the precise course of study best calculated to develop the capacities of will and intellect with which he sought to endow his students during his more than fifty years' association with Williams College. But it does give an excellent picture of the forces which frequently before the Civil War, and decreasingly thereafter, produced men of Mark Hopkins's character; of the external events of his life; of the theological and metaphysical problems which beset him, and of his resolute struggle with them which somehow transformed him into a man who came to exercise an extraordinary influence over his contemporaries.

The externals of his career can be briefly summarized. He was born in 1802 of sound Stockbridge farmer stock, with excellent connections throughout

New England, but constrained by the nature of the times to struggle bare-handed with a none-too-rewarding soil. His education at the new college in Williamstown was made possible by genuine and severe sacrifice on the part of his whole family. Upon graduation, assailed with doubts as to his capabilities and his proper work in life, he tried school-teaching in Pittsfield and in the wilderness of Virginia; studied medicine and attempted fruitlessly to practise it in New York; finally was called back to Williams as Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric, shortly to be made President at the age of 34. In these brief years, through energy and application, he had acquired an extraordinarily varied intellectual equipment, theological, literary, philosophic, and scientific. But the striking fact is that then and for long afterward, even when through his college addresses, his public lectures, and the effect of his strongly developing character on those who studied under him, he was moving forward to a position of national prestige, his main preoccupation was with the basic problems of man's nature, destiny, and relation to the Universe and its Creator.

Mr. Denison's argument (which, however, is not allowed to obscure the charm and documentary value of his book) is that Mark Hopkins was the sympathetic interpreter of two theological extremes one to the other: the great mediator between the old Calvinistic theology of Jonathan Edwards and of his own great-uncle Samuel Hopkins, and the new ethical system represented by the Unitarian revolt: between a God of hell-fire and sure damnation save for the elect on the one hand, and on the other a God reduced to a set of naked ethical absolutes. Hopkins himself stood for a Christianity which stressed the duty to love God, taught the literal imitation of Christ, and was based, as well as one can judge, upon an extraordinarily sound instinct for natural religion.

Although much could be said concerning Hopkins's faith and this presentation of it, what is here chiefly interesting is its manifestation in his educational activity at Williams College. His object was clear: to fire his students to a study of the nature of man and man's environment, in order that they might reflect with profit upon the problem of the chief purpose and end of humanity. His method was simple: to make the boys conscious of those fundamental problems which concerned their very reason for being, the bases of their conduct, and their right relations to each other and to the world. By this means he not only gained for himself the love and respect of a dozen undergraduate generations, and the admiration of the country at large; but he sent forth from his lectures a group of graduates so formed in character and intellect that, considering the size of the institution from which they came, they exercised a remarkable influence in the intellectual, social, and political life of their time.

It is true that in Hopkins's time theology and metaphysics were in the air that all save dunces breathed: his pedogogical problem did not compare in magnitude with the problem he would have met in gaining the initial interest of the undergraduate of today. But in an age when for practical purposes all that is left of the studies which Mark Hopkins considered central is a mechanistic psychology; when the past is searched for material to support an economic or social thesis in the present, rather than for examples of what happens when men's character and conduct is thus or so; when the whole emphasis of educators is on arousing the interest of the student, no matter what the object of that interest; when even teachers themselves, however much they may speak of "educating for character", are increasingly taken aback at the lack of character and absence of firmly based standards displayed by the graduates they turn out; when, in short, society is crying fruitlessly for men who are something more than efficient machines to accomplish material ends, it is perhaps permitted to ask whether there is not place for a few educational institutions which shall make it their business to raise in the minds of young men the questions that were Hopkins's passionate concern.

"What we need in this age of physics," wrote a Williams graduate to Mark Hopkins in 1883, "is more metaphysics, sharply defined and clearly presented." This biography supplies substance to that plea. The kind of conservative in education who demands "a return to the old-fashioned college, with Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and the student on the other", will perhaps be shocked to learn that what he is really pleading for is a return to an education that was chiefly concerned with theology and metaphysics. The modernist in education, pathetically anxious to "fit the student for leadership in a collective society", but having no confidence as to the means, may come to suspect that leaders will never be produced by an educational system which neglects – indeed shuns and deprecates – those studies which force the student to a stern confronting of the old and life-giving questions of the nature and destiny of man.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

A Pessimistic Moralist*

FIRST presented as a course of lectures for the Rauschenbusch Foundation at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in the spring of 1934, this book has for its scope an interpretation of Christian ethics which may enable the modern man to "look at the confusion of his day without despair and seek to coerce its anarchy into some new order without the fury of self-righteousness".

To such a purpose Dr. Niebuhr is led by his belief that Protestant Christianity in America is unable to offer guidance and insight to perplexed humanity at a moment when "the modern mind faces the disintegration of its civilization in alternate moods of fear and hope, of faith and despair". The orthodox churches have long since compounded Christian truth with outmoded dogmatisms, he says, while the liberal churches have been dominated by an anxiety to prove that they do not share "the anachronistic ethics or believe the incredible myths of orthodox religion". In this crisis Dr. Niebuhr turns to what he calls the myth of the Creator God, for "the myth of creation offers the firm foundation for a world view which sees the Transcendent involved in, but not identified with, the process of history". Mythical thought he holds to be not only pre-scientific but also supra-scientific, for it deals with vertical aspects of reality which transcend the horizontal relations which science analyzes, charts, and records. "The classical myth

* AN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS *by Reinhold Niebuhr* (HARPERS. 244 pp. $2.00).

refers to the transcendent source and end of existence without abstracting it from existence."

To the world-view based on this classical myth he gives the title of prophetic religion, the distinctive feature of which is, according to Soderblom, that it sets the Creator above the creature, the living, jealous God above every other image and likeness. Out of this prophetic religion there must grow, he thinks, a vital Christian faith "capable of dealing adequately with the moral and social problems of our age".

In the Niebuhr philosophy, to say that the basic insights of prophetic religion are derived from myth is not to condemn them as falsities. Myth, it seems, is somehow truth; its purpose is "to state a paradoxical aspect of reality in terms of concepts connoting historical sequence [and] it always leads to historical illusions". One such historical illusion quoted by the author is the hope in the early Church of the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom. Those historical illusions merely serve to present to Christian ethics the problem of compromise, the problem of maintaining tentative harmonies of life in the world "while at the same time preserving the indictment upon all human life of the impossible possibility, the law of love". If this does not seem very intelligible, don't blame the reviewer; the concept of an "impossible possibility" is just something he cannot comprehend. But Dr. Niebuhr persists in using the phrase; he devotes a whole chapter to the relevance of an impossible ethical ideal, and in evaluating the ethic of Jesus he tells us that "the apocalypse is a mythical expression of the impossible possibility under which all human life stands".

In his discussion of the moral choice, a question which is treated in the chapter dealing with the Christian conception of sin, Dr. Niebuhr indicates that the fault of modern culture is that it views human life in terms of a single dimension whereas there must also be considered a second dimension, a vertical dimension he calls it, which reveals the ultimate possibilities of good and the depths of evil in human life. An example will indicate the line of the argument.

> A business man is forced to earn his livelihood within terms of an economic system in which perfect honesty would probably lead to self-destruction. According to the sensitivity of his spirit he will find some compromise between the immoral actions to which he is tempted by the necessities of the social system in which he operates and the ideal possibilities which his conscience projects. A general sense of religious guilt is therefore a fruitful source of moral responsibility in immediate situations.

In this illustration we have, first, what the author calls "the horizontal points of a political or social ethic or the diagonals which a prudential individual ethic draws between the moral ideal and the facts of a given situation". Then, there is the religious ideal, the vertical dimension of the impossibly possible, which is presented to the Christian in business life by "the absolutism and perfectionism of Jesus' love ethic". Finally, we have what the author describes in such cases as the simple moral guilt "transmuted into a sense of religious guilt which feels a general responsibility for that for which the individual agent cannot be immediately responsible".

Assuming that the individual is not immediately responsible for the injustices that Dr. Niebuhr believes to be inherent in our economic system, it is difficult to understand why he should have a sense of guilt for that which he cannot help and why his feeling of guilt should be construed as a product of his Christian heritage. To say that a feeling of religious guilt is a dynamic of moral responsibility seems very like saying that the man who is beset by moral scruples is better equipped to make moral decisions than the well-balanced individual. The logical consequence of our author's argument would seem to be that the non-Christian man, who is assumedly without the advantage of a feeling of religious guilt, is more likely to be dishonest than his Christian associate. This is simply to say that honesty is not a natural virtue and that the pre-Christian philosophers did not know what they were talking about.

When Dr. Niebuhr comes to the discussion of politics and economics he tells us that in this field Christianity has been more frequently a source of confusion than a source of insight and constructive guidance. Careful, however, to point out that such an indictment must be qualified, he makes exceptions of "the contribution of Thomasian Catholicism to the peace and order of thirteenth-century Europe and the dynamic relation of Calvinism to the democratic developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries". But he goes on to say:

> Yet on the whole it must be admitted that rationalistic political theory from Aristotle and the Stoics to the thought of the eighteenth century and the theories of Marx, have contributed more to a progressive reassessment of the problems of justice with which politics deals than either orthodox or liberal Christian thought.

And from this he proceeds to state that the political ideas which governed Christianity's compromise with the necessities of politics are drawn chiefly from the Pauline conception of the divine ordinance of government and the Stoic conception of the natural law. The natural law "supposedly establishes universal standards of right conduct and action which are not identical with the standard of love but have equal validity as laws of God". His charge against the Christian application of the theory of the *jus naturale* is that orthodox Christianity placed undue emphasis "upon the relative natural law which was applicable to the world of sin, as against the absolute natural law which demanded equality and freedom".

In the main, the charge is true. The Christian Fathers did accept the *jus naturale* with all its political implications. It led them into an attitude of political determinism in which they came to acquiesce in such institutions as that of slavery because of their belief in the Fall. But the Christian Fathers are not responsible, as the author seems to imply, for the introduction of the theory of the *jus naturale* into the philosophies of the West. That pernicious theory had been already borrowed from the Stoics by the Roman jurists as an apologetic for the iniquities of Roman civil law. It was the revival of Roman Law at Bologna in the beginning of the twelfth century that became the handwriting on the wall as far as the security of mediaeval civilization was concerned.

Mediaeval civilization, which is the only Christian civilization the West has known, was built upon the principle of function, exemplified by John of Salisbury when he said "a well-ordered constitution consists in the proper apportionment of function to members and in the apt condition and strength and composition of each and every member; that all the members must in their functions supplement and support each other, never losing sight of the well-being of the others and always feeling pain in the harm that is done to another". Into this political philosophy of reciprocal rights and duties the jurists of Bologna introduced the theory of Roman law with its notion of the *jus naturale* and its idea of social order as above social justice. Rights then became absolute and duties optional, feudalism became landlordism, and a way was opened for the growth of capitalism and individualism. The corporate spirit of mediaeval law was utterly lost.

Dr. Niebuhr is quite awake to the diseases from which our civilization suffers today, and he is merciless in his attack upon the gay and easy confidence with which the modern churches approach the injustices and conflicts of our time. Shailer Mathews, Birney Smith, Peabody, Buchman, Bishop McConnell, Stanley Jones, and several other churchmen come under the lash of his criticism. His own cure for our social and political disorder betrays a state of bewilderment at what he calls "the fury of the social struggle". He finds little to justify the hope that a prophetic interpretation of human life will wield a potent influence in contemporary history. "On the whole it will have no more influence in a secular age that humanism had in an age when religion had degenerated to magic. Yet the humanism of the Middle Ages was an exceedingly important seed corn for all that was good in the history of Western culture."

On this note he brings his profoundly pessimistic book to a close. Yet he insists that the prophetic religion he advocates is marked by an ultimate optimism and that in the faith of such a view of Christian ethics the triumph of good over evil is ultimately more certain than in other forms of religion. The reader will doubtless have difficulty in accepting such a claim, for there is a persistent strain of something like Manichaeism running through the whole book. Evil seems, in the Niebuhr view, to be part of the fabric of human nature. "Man, as the creature of both necessity and freedom, must, like Moses, always perish outside the promised land. He can see what he cannot reach." He is a creature of perversity, it appears, and every conceivable order in the historical world rests upon contingency and caprice and contains an element of anarchy. The dominant attitudes of prophetic religion, he tells us, are "confidence that life is good in spite of its evil and that it is evil in spite of its good".

Unfortunately for the constructive value of the book Dr. Niebuhr throws the emphasis of his argument on the evil in human life. His sincere indignation at the wrongs that flourish in our civilization is something that every honest thinker must share. It is therefore all the more to be regretted that he has not yet discovered, within the limitations of human nature itself, any evidence of aptitudes or potencies which would bring into the realm of practical politics the ethical values so necessary to a full and harmonized social life and to an adjustment of our present economic discrepancies.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Three Little Girls*

ONCE there were three little girls — this starts off like the story told at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, but the likeness ends there. Not one of the three fell into a treacle-well, not even though they all grew up and each wrote the story of her own childhood; for if there were ever three less sentimental and more delightful autobiographies of childhood than Sigrid Undset's *The Longest Years*, Sheila Kaye-Smith's *Selina*, and Helen Woodward's *Three Flights Up*, I have never come across them.

On the surface it would seem as though the three books could have very little in common, for their authors write at the distance of "the round earth's imagined corners" from each other. Fru Undset writes of Norway and Denmark and Sweden, of a childhood spent in more than merely scholarly poverty, for her father had years of invalidism before his death at the age of forty. Miss Kaye-Smith's — or, to be exact, "Selina's" — father was a physician, fairly prosperous, in an English town. Mrs. Woodward's girlhood was spent "three flights up" in a Manhattan flat, and the father of that family was, when he was at it, a cigar-maker and an immigrant from Poland.

Certainly the reader who reads of all three of these utterly dissimilar childhoods will have had diversified fare; but nevertheless the similarities are more striking than one divergence between these records. And that, I am sure, is because they come from authors who were once little girls. If there is in nature a creature more delicately sensuous than a small girl it must be inarticulate. Every shade of color registers on that sensitive instrument, every odour; the textures of flannel and silk; the sound of coals falling in a grate, all are perceived, stored away but kept accessible, to be taken out again years later as memories, but memories as clear and pungent as the original sensation.

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* THE LONGEST YEARS *by Sigrid Undset.* (KNOPF. 332 pp. $2.50).

SELINA *by Sheila Kaye-Smith.* (HARPERS. 304 pp. $2.50).

THREE FLIGHTS UP *by Helen Woodward.* (DODD, MEAD. 260 pp. $3.00).

Sigrid Undset introduces her child at the age of fifteen months. She calls her little heroine "Ingvild", but, like Miss Kaye-Smith, makes no protest when every reader penetrates the easy disguise and treats the book like the autobiography it so obviously is. Perhaps both these authors have used a name not their own as a device to aid in detachment, and in both cases it seems to have justified itself amply: they look back on those early selves humorously, tenderly, stoically. (Mrs. Woodward writes in the first person, but introduces herself at the comparatively advanced age of eight.) Even at fifteen months Ingvild was feeling, and feeling distinctions:

> The first thing Ingvild remembered was having just crawled from the lawn away to a strip of bare ground that lay in front of a hedge of green bushes.
>
> The mould is brown and loose and warmed by the sun. The child lets it run through her fingers onto her bare calves and white socks, making them grey. Wild with delight she pours and pours, knowing that when they come they will pick her up, dust her, and carry her away. . . .

The promise of sensitive recording that those early paragraphs give is kept to the last page. Soon thought begins, thought still inextricably mixed with sensations; and what the minute Ingvild made of her nightly prayer will turn every reader who ever suffered from "If I should die before I wake" into blood-kin. For Ingvild saw a phantasmagoria made up of an Eye, a roof, a triangle, and a nurse (since "Amen" and "Ammen", a nurse, sound just alike) whose favorite expletive was "For Jesus' sake!" Throughout the book these misapprehensions about vital matters are quietly mentioned. No blame is assigned; it is impossible to foresee or forestall the wild childish imagination. But a little less free-thinking in the home, the reader is given to understand, a more consistent observance of religious forms until such time as the awakening intellect and religious emotion could be trusted not to come to fantastic individual conclusions, would not have been amiss.

But on the whole, it was a happy childhood. The archaeologist-father's illness, even, was not entirely an evil, since his children could grow up with him as a constant comrade, though it forced the family from one shabby house to another shabbier still till at the age of fourteen there was hardly a stratum of life that Ingvild had not known. There were country interludes, too, at the home of one or the other set of grandparents, and many schools in which the children learned less than they learned from the conversation of their house-bound parents. Then, belatedly but passionately, Ingvild fell in love with books. Very "mercifully", too, as our ancestors would have said, for it happened just before the death of her idolized father.

The title of the book seems to promise others to come. There can hardly be too many of them for Fru

Undset's admirers, who, beside the joy they take in the book for its own sake, will find here hints of the originals of many of scenes and characters from her novels.

Miss Kaye-Smith's is the second of her "Selina" stories, and here, too, one can trace the influences which later made her novels. These books cover only a year each, but so vivid is Miss Kaye-Smith's memory of those days, so penetrating her own insight into each early episode and crisis, that they seem quite as full as autobiographies which cover a longer period. Those who read the earlier *Summer Holiday* will need no urging to begin this, and they will find it even harder to lay aside. Moira, that younger sister, that imp of perversity, is older now, less a nuisance though no less a rival and a problem. (Each of these three authors was an elder sister; and in every case they agree in believing that younger child to have been infinitely more favoured with winsomeness, beauty, and a kind of inhuman and unmalicious guile.)

Selina's problem, too, turned upon religion. Surrounded by comfort, by love and beauty, still there was an element of life which Selina needed for full and happy growth, and it was denied her. She was religiously gifted – if such a phrase may be allowed – and needed more than the perfunctory rites which were prescribed for her in order to exercise her gift. Few stories are at once so funny and so tragic as that of Selina's hunt for an outlet for her almost mystical devotion; and it is with genuine relief that the reader remembers that Selina's original has openly announced her religious allegiance. The stark loneliness she felt at eight has, happily, been dissipated.

Mrs. Woodward had no such religious problem, or rather brought another attitude to it, and that is the great divergence in her book. Indeed it is only in the remarks which she makes about religion that she seems less acute, less sensitive than the other two writers considered here. For whether she is speaking of Christianity or the Feast of the Passover, she seems, to this reviewer, to be giving evidence of a kind of tone-deafness toward religion. But there is little of that tone-deafness in the book, and a great deal which is fresh and vital and charming. It does not do to say that one child "has" less than another, meaning, by that phrase, merely material advantages. Children take so much of what they need wherever they can find it. Mrs. Woodward herself tells us that she wanted a toy blackboard and chalk, and that Papa wanted a piano, which "came when I was twenty years old, and it was too late". But she had bubble-pipes and jackstones, and scores of games to play with other children in the streets; there were picnics in the park, aunts and uncles and cousins, till the record of those early days brims over.

It was never an easy childhood, but this story of it is — I hope its author will forgive the words! — essentially sweet. Mrs. Woodward is openly "a radical", but she is the first to say "Yet . . . I can see that as a 'proletarian writer', I must be a severe disappointment. I saw so little of dirt and depravity, and I have to confess that these years of my childhood were cheerful and pleasant." And a little later she remarks, very acutely, "Many a sentence in this chapter would read more smoothly if I should say poor people instead of working people, but I cannot do it. We never thought of ourselves as poor. Skilled workers do not call themselves 'destitute' or 'poor'. They talk about being hard up."

Poverty forced this family, like the Norwegian family, into movement: there was a tragi-comic pilgrimage to Arkansas; there were years in Boston. The more comfortable little Selina shuttled between her winter home and Platnix Farm in the summer; the two "poorer" heroines covered an astonishingly amount of ground. All the children had love and security and a fair amount of comfort, and it is love and security which make children happy. But a *rich* childhood comes not by way of material wealth, but through literature and a tradition. It is no mere accidental craving that the heroine of *Three Flights Up* felt when she longed for books, fell starving on any scrap of printed matter that she could find. Financially, "Ingvild's" family led as precarious a life as the life in that Manhattan flat; but she went to sleep night after night to the sound of her mother's voice reading aloud to her father, reading *Peter Schlemihl*, and Shakespeare, and Heine. At eight the little English girl was writing plays which showed a wide acquaintance with literature and legend. And so, when the American announces herself "a radical", it is impossible not to suspect — for one who has read all three books not to suspect — that in reality she is yearning for very much more than any present radicalism promises: for an enduring tradition, for a home that has land around it, and books around its walls, for a voice reading aloud in the firelight. . . . But these are graceless speculations.

MIRIAM COLGATE

Revolution and Freemasonry*

ALL who are familiar with France in the past or the present are aware that Freemasonry plays and has played an important part in her political and social life, but what that part is remains something of a mystery. Catholic and conservative writers usually attribute to Masonry a considerable rôle in the preparations of the French Revolution, and it is believed by many people that the Lodges exert today a great influence over political men and parties. Yet those who state this most emphatically are seldom able to substantiate their declarations by concrete facts, and the question of the real power of Masonry is still obscure. What is certain is that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it has been a powerful and determined enemy of Catholicism and of the conservative tradition in France, and a stronghold of the Jacobin type of radicalism. It is significant that Fascism has made haste to stamp it out as far as possible in Italy. What exactly did French Freemasonry originally represent? What were its beginnings and its philosophy? In view of its supposed power today these questions are of real interest, and those who care to understand France will do well to read Mr. Bernard Faÿ's new book, *Revolution and Freemasonry, 1680-1800*. Mr. Faÿ is well qualified to write of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century. His first book, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, is a scholarly study of the thought of that period, and his present volume answers some, at least, of the questions about Freemasonry which an historian is bound to ask.

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* REVOLUTION AND FREEMASONRY, 1680-1800 *by Bernard Faÿ* (LITTLE, BROWN. 363 pp. $3.00).

In the first part of his book (which is by far the best) Mr. Faÿ studies the origins of Freemasonry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He shows us its connection with the scientific discoveries of Newton, which were revolutionizing the thought of the period, and he proves the essentially aristocratic character of Freemasonry in those days, its successful efforts to attract first the English and then the French nobility, and its dependence on their prestige for its own growth in power and prosperity. His studies of some of the early patrons or founders of the order, notably Boulainvilliers and Desguliers, though highly critical and ironic, are among the most interesting portions of the book. According to Mr. Faÿ, English Freemasonry early became the champion of the revolution of 1688, and of the parliamentary régime which it brought to power. Moreover, it continued to defend the Hanoverian dynasty against the deposed Stuarts and their protectors, the Bourbons, and the success of the dynasty which they favoured eventually brought about a great difference in the later attitudes of English and French Freemasonry.

As to its philosophy Mr. Faÿ indicates that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Freemasonry attempted to create a synthesis between the scientific thought of the day on the one hand, and Deism, nonconformist religion, and Protestantism on the other. In his conclusion he states that Masonry was fundamentally rationalistic in its point of view, and that its ritual, ceremonies, and secrecy were intended to supply men with the mystery in the material field from which it sought to wean them in the metaphysical domain. "The Catholic Church", he says, "worshiped openly a mysterious god. Freemasonry honoured mysteriously a logical principle. . . . The Masonic god had no mystery, while the Masonic society was all mystery" (p. 317). Hence the fundamental conflict between Masonry and Catholicism. Masonry, by undermining the authority of revealed religion, and offering a seemingly wider synthesis of reason and mysticism, in which men of various conditions and opinions might meet, was preparing the way for the advent of the modern "lay State". Moreover, in spite of its aristocratic character, it always emphasized the ideas of equality and fraternity. One gathers from Mr. Faÿ's book that Freemasonry in the eighteenth century represented on the whole the viewpoint of the liberal nobility who undoubtedly did so much to prepare and precipitate the first phase of the French Revolution (from 1789-1792). So far, then, Mr. Faÿ seems to prove his point, and moreover he sheds considerable light upon the character and origins of Freemasonry.

The latter part of his book is less satisfactory. It is difficult to believe, as Mr. Faÿ seems almost to imply, that the American Revolution was largely the result of a Masonic plot! The wider factors which brought about our separation from England, of which Mr. Faÿ speaks, only to dismiss them rather too rapidly, seem to most historians much more important than he tends to allow. As to the French Revolution also, his point of view is questionable. He seems to see it as essentially a religious conflict. Thus he says:

> French Masons were, then, hoping to establish a religion which would not be bound by dogmas and ruled by a

religious hierarchy, but would become part of the whole social life of the country and would recognize as its primary aim service to mankind and the nation. . . . All the French Assemblies between 1788 and 1799 held these views and cherished these desires. . . . As they were in earnest they did not cease trying to reform French religion, *which led them to break with the Pope, and to start in France a religious war which, added to the country's other difficulties, put France into the state of lyrical and bloody disorder called the "Grande Revolution"*. (P. 296. The italics are mine.)

This passage and others on the following pages would seem to imply that for Mr. Faÿ the Revolution was in its essence a religious struggle. Just as the Marxian historian tends to see in the Revolution only an episode of the class struggle, so Faÿ, writing from a conservative and Catholic point of view, tends to see in it chiefly a conflict between the religious and the lay conception of the State. The idea is an interesting one, and it would explain a phenomenon patent to those who know France well, namely the continued existence of what a Swiss writer has called "the two Frances". Nevertheless, few students of the Revolution will accept so limited an interpretation of that complex event, for to do so is to overlook many vital factors. Mr. Faÿ's apparent contention that Freemasonry was a leading cause both of the American and the French Revolutions, seems to be at best an exaggeration. It is certainly not sufficiently established by this book.

The subject is no doubt a difficult one to disentangle. Mr. Faÿ has himself admitted that a scholarly and exhaustive treatment of Masonry is almost impossible. Few Lodges, he says, have kept their eighteenth-century records, and these, even when they exist, being primarily administrative, are dry, and give little idea of the real philosophy or activities of the order. Thus Mr. Faÿ's bibliography, particularly as regards the later portions of his work, consists largely of secondary material, as is natural, since the primary sources are so limited. Moreover, the subject itself is highly controversial, so that an objective point of view is difficult. If the writer is a Mason, he will, as Mr. Faÿ points out, be apt to be eulogistic. If he is not a Mason, and particularly if he is a Catholic, he will also have certain preconceptions. Whether or not he be a Mason, Masonic secrecy will impede him.

It is to the credit of Mr. Faÿ that he has written so readable a book on this interesting but obscure subject, and one which tells us some, at least, of the important things which we would like to know in regard to Freemasonry. The book shows evidences of haste. It is not so clear nor so well-constructed as one might have hoped from Mr. Faÿ's usually lucid pen. The irony in which he often indulges, witty as it is – for Mr. Faÿ enjoys paradox – will not always please, or perhaps be comprehended by, an American public. Yet the book is certainly a contribution both to our knowledge of that most fascinating and complex period, the eighteenth century, and to a little-known but vital subject. As such it is an important book and deserves to be read and considered with care.

CHARLOTTE MURET